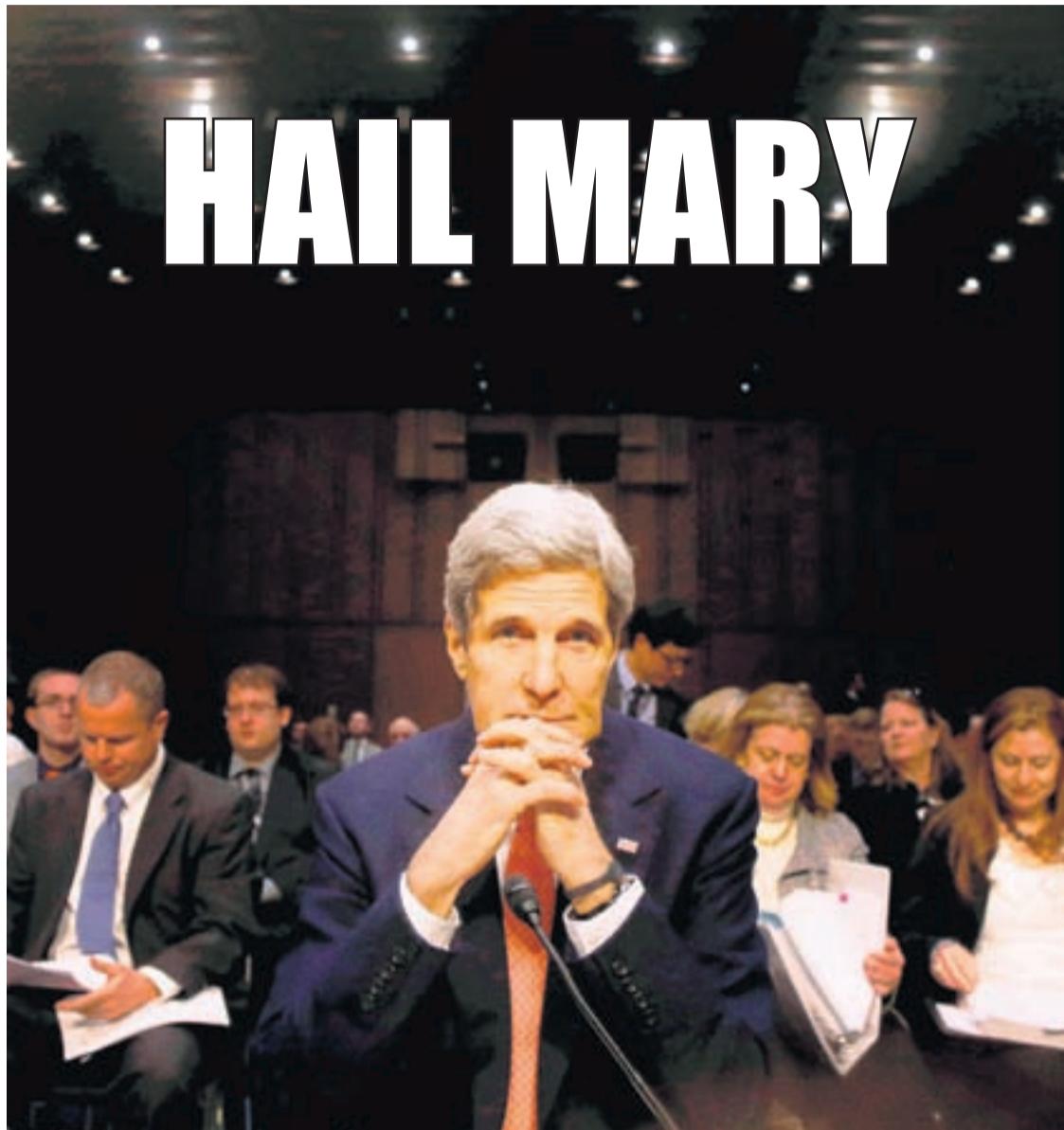


On Top Of The News Email:news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel:+297 582-7800 Friday, March 14, 2014



Secretary of State John Kerry prepares to testify on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, March 13, 2014, before the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Related Program hearing regarding the fiscal year 2015 State Department budget. In his opening remarks Kerry spoke about the Ukraine and other current foreign relation issues.

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

West embarks on last attempt to preserve Ukraine

LARA JAKES
MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a last-minute bid to stave off a new chapter in the East-West crisis over Ukraine, Secretary of State John Kerry warned Russia on Thursday that it faces immediate and "very serious" sanctions if it annexes Ukraine's strategic Crimea region. His comments echoed those of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who hours earlier said Russia risks "massive" political and economic consequences if it refuses to soft-

en its stance against the new government in Kiev. The warnings from the West served as a last attempt to head off a confrontation over Crimea, which holds a vote Sunday on whether to break off from Ukraine and perhaps join Russia. The showdown has been cast as a struggle for the future of Ukraine, a country with the size and population similar to France, which is caught between its long-standing ties and traditions with Russia and more progressive and economic opportunities in the West. Kerry was headed to Lon-

don later Thursday in his last meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov before the Crimea vote. In a brief phone call Thursday morning, Kerry underscored U.S. concerns about the Crimea vote and made clear there will be costs if Russia continues to escalate the crisis, according to a senior State Department official familiar with the discussion. The official was not authorized to discuss the situation by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Continued on page 2

At Casa del Mar: An emotional farewell from Friends of the Handicapped



PUNTA BRABO - A gathering at Casa Del Mar marked the last check presentation by FOTH, Friends of the Handicapped, concluding the not-for-profit foundation's activities on the island.

The gathering was attended by Minister Paul Croes on behalf of the Government of Aruba, the Ministry of Social Affairs,

Youth Policy and Labor, and by Ernest Giel, on behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority.

Also present CEDE Aruba's management team Mariëlle Hoeijmakers and Daniel B. Tecklenborg, beside representations of most of Aruba's NGO, caring for the physically, mentally and socially handicapped residents of this island.

The Friends of the Handi-

capped Foundation, founded by Mr. and Mrs. Jones who vacationed here at their timeshare resort, consisted of other North American visitors staying at Casa del Mar, Aruba Beach Club and Costa Linda.

They collected funds for charities among tourists and locals for the past 27 years.

All board members of the foundation were volunteers, who during their winter vacation months worked on behalf of the disadvantaged.

Art Stark, from Illinois, has been the tireless foundation president for the past 20 years, working side by side with his equally-tireless wife Alma.

Continued on page 13



West embarks on last attempt to preserve Ukraine

Continued from Front

Kerry and Lavrov have spoken almost daily as the Ukraine crisis has unfolded but have yet to find any common ground.

At a Senate hearing, Kerry said Moscow should expect the U.S. and European Union to take measures against it on Monday if Russia accepts and acts on a decision by Crimea to secede from Ukraine. The U.S. and EU say the vote Sunday violates Ukraine's constitution and international law. Russia has said it will respect the results of the referendum.

"There will be a response of some kind of the referendum itself and, in addition, if there is no sign of any capacity to be able to move forward and resolve this issue, there will be a very serious series of steps on Monday in Europe and here," Kerry told the Senate panel.

It was not clear, however, whether Russia would heed the warnings, and Moscow has refused demands by the West to pull back troops from Crimea and respect Ukraine's territorial boundaries. Under a long-standing security agreement with Ukraine, Russia is allowed to deploy up to 25,000 troops to the Crimean Peninsula, and

has a large navy there.

"There are limits on how much blunt force, in terms of sanctions and isolation, will move somebody who doesn't seem to have been particularly responsive to that throughout his career," said John Norris, a security expert at the liberal-leaning Center for American Progress think-tank in Washington. He was refer-

ring to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

However, Norris said, the people around Putin, including Russian business leaders and wealthy citizens who travel to the West, may have more influence on Moscow if they start feeling squeezed by sanctions. "That may not be decisive in Putin's thinking right now, but I think it does

begin to move the thinking of those around him," Norris said.

Kerry said he planned to make clear how high the stakes are when he sees Lavrov in London, and suggested he would press Russia to accept "something short of a full annexation" of Crimea — but did not elaborate on what that might entail.

"My hope is that they will come aware of the fact that the international community is really strong and united on this issue," he said. President Barack Obama has imposed limited sanctions against unidentified Russian officials thought by the U.S. to be directly involved in destabilizing Ukraine.

But Congress on Thursday



German Chancellor Angela Merkel speaks at the German parliament in Berlin, Germany, Thursday March 13, 2014. German Chancellor Angela Merkel warned Moscow on Thursday that if it continues its current course in the Ukraine crisis, Russia risks "massive" political and economic consequences. In an address to Parliament, Merkel told lawmakers the only way out of the crisis is through diplomacy and assured lawmakers that "the use of the military is no option."

(AP Photo/dpa, Maurizio Gambarini)

Missing plane sent signals to satellite for hours

JOAN LOWY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Malaysia Airlines plane was sending signals to a satellite for four hours after the aircraft went missing, an indication that it was still flying, said a U.S. official briefed on the search for the plane.

The Boeing 777-200 wasn't transmitting data to the satellite, but was instead sending out a signal to establish contact, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the situation by name.

Boeing offers a satellite

service that can receive a stream of data during flight on how the aircraft is functioning and relay the information to the plane's home base. The idea is to provide information on whether maintenance work or repairs are needed before the plane lands so mechanics and parts can be ready, saving time and money.

Malaysia Airlines didn't subscribe to that service, but the plane still had the capability of connecting with the satellite and was automatically sending pings, the official said.

"It's like when your cellphone is off but it still

sends out a little 'I'm here' message to the cellphone network," the official said. "That's how sometimes they can triangulate your position even though you're not calling because the phone every so often sends out a little bleep. That's sort of what this thing was doing." The continuing pings led searchers to believe the plane could have flown hundreds of miles or more beyond its last confirmed sighting on radar, the official said. The plane had enough fuel to fly about four more hours, he said. The plane was en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing when radar

contact was lost. Messages involving a different, more rudimentary data service also were received from the airliner for a short time after the plane's transponder — a device used to identify the plane to radar — went silent, the official said.

The plane was initially thought to have gone down over the South China Sea. According to defense officials, the USS Kidd, a destroyer, is heading into the Indian Ocean. A U.S. surveillance plane is in the Strait of Malacca region and another U.S. surveillance plane is now en route to Malaysia, defense officials said. □

put off a vote that would have expanded those sanctions, as well as approve \$1 billion in loan guarantees to Ukraine and International Monetary Fund revisions to help Kiev. The Senate won't vote on the measure until March 24 at the earliest, when lawmakers return from a week-long recess, while House Republicans are pushing their own Ukraine aid bill that includes no Russia sanctions or IMF provisions. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., sharply criticized fellow Republicans for not acting "when the people of Ukraine are crying out for our help." He said he'd never been more embarrassed by members of his own party. □

Bin Laden kin says knew of 'something big' before 9/11

JENNIFER PELTZ

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Osama bin Laden's son-in-law and al-Qaida spokesman said he heard before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks that "something big was going to happen" but didn't know what it was, an FBI agent testified Thursday.

Sulaiman Abu Ghaith told authorities that when he visited al-Qaida training camps in the summer of 2001, he gleaned something major was in the works but never learned of any specific plan to attack the United States, Agent Michael Butsch testified at Abu Ghaith's federal trial in New York.

But Abu Ghaith said he was summoned to bin Laden's home after the Sept. 11 attacks unfolded, Butsch said. "Bin Laden first asked him, 'Did you see what happened?,' referring to the attacks. And he said he did, and bin Laden said that he did this operation," the agent said, recounting statements the government says Abu Ghaith made while being flown to the U.S. on an FBI jet after his capture last year.

The highest-ranking al-Qaida figure to be tried on U.S. soil since the attacks, Abu Ghaith has pleaded not guilty to conspiring to kill Americans and providing material support to al-Qaida.

Bin Laden then asked Abu Ghaith, a Kuwait-born imam who had agreed that summer to put his rhetorical skills to work for al-Qaida, to give a series of speeches — and even gave him bullet points, Abu Ghaith recalled, according to the FBI agent.

Abu Ghaith went on to make a series of videotaped speeches, the first of them on Sept. 12, with bin Laden and other al-Qaida leaders visible alongside him.

"He said the purpose of these videotapes was for propaganda, to get them out into the media," Butsch said. In an Oct. 9, 2001, video, for instance, Abu Ghaith threatened that "America must know that the storm of airplanes will not abate, with God's permission."

According to the FBI's account of Abu Ghaith's statements, he initially went to Afghanistan in June 2001 because he was interested in jihadist movements and soon was invited to meet bin Laden, who had heard a tape of his preaching. Abu Ghaith said he knew al-Qaida viewed people who didn't share its beliefs as "infidels," but he compared the group's worldview to former President George W. Bush's declaration that other nations were "either with us or against us" in the war on terrorism. Bin Laden asked him to give sermons at his family compound and to speak at training camps, explaining that "military hardens the heart"; Abu Ghaith said he talked to the recruits about religion and the importance of their training and defending Islam. Bin Laden requested he join al-Qaida, which Abu Ghaith declined, but he agreed to help the group as a scholar and orator and became its spokesman, engendering envy from others in the group.

Still, Abu Ghaith told authorities "he had many discussions with bin Laden that showed that they had differences in their beliefs," Butsch said. And Abu Ghaith said he believed jihad, or holy war, doesn't necessarily mean only fighting, but could entail such undertakings as science and building.

Abu Ghaith's defense has noted that he's not accused of involvement in the Sept. 11 plot and has said that while he's an ideologue, he's not a terrorism conspirator. One of his attorneys, Zoe Dolan, pointed out while cross-examining Butsch that his exchange with Abu Ghaith, conducted via an FBI translator, wasn't recorded or transcribed. Abu Ghaith's lawyers have said the 48-year-old married bin Laden's eldest daughter, Fatima, about five years ago. □

Obama orders rule changes to expand overtime pay

DAVID S. JOACHIM

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WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama, declaring that "Americans have spent far too long working more but earning less," ordered the Labor Department on Thursday to revise federal rules on overtime pay to make millions more workers eligible for extra pay when they work more than 40 hours a week.

ernment and has established a new type of tax-sheltered retirement plan for young workers.

Administration officials have said these actions are needed because wages have stagnated despite soaring corporate profits, especially since the economic recovery began five years ago. Among the companies listed in the Standard

in a written statement.

White House officials said that as many as 88 percent of salaried workers are not guaranteed "time and a half" overtime pay because they earn more than the cap of \$455 a week (roughly \$24,000 per year). Those workers can be denied overtime pay if they spend any time supervising other workers — the so-called white-collar ex-



President Barack Obama signs an order overhauling federal rules on overtime pay, at the White House in Washington, March 13, 2014. The order, which will make millions of Americans eligible for overtime pay by removing the so-called white-collar exemption, is part of a series of moves by the administration to sidestep congressional gridlock on his economic proposals.

(Gabriella Demczuk/The New York Times)

"Unfortunately today, millions of Americans aren't getting the extra pay they deserve," Obama said in an 11-minute ceremony in the East Room of the White House. He said that a federal rule meant to limit overtime "for highly paid, white-collar employees" now covers workers earning as little as \$24,000 a year.

"Overtime is a pretty simple idea," Obama said. "If you work more, you should be paid more."

It is the latest in a series of executive actions Obama has taken recently to sidestep Congress, where Republicans have blocked Democratic proposals to reduce economic inequality. For example, he has ordered an increase in the minimum wage paid by companies that do business with the federal gov-

& Poor's 500-stock index, profits have doubled since then, even as the portion of the economy that goes to worker pay has dropped to an all-time low.

Business lobbying groups denounce the changes as regulatory overreach, saying that they will crimp economic growth and leave companies with no choice but to shed workers as their costs rise.

"The president's plan to increase overtime pay demonstrates another anti-business policy — coming on the heels of a proposal to increase the minimum wage, increase the minimum tipped wage, rising health care costs, as well as ever-growing, costly and unwieldy regulations," Eric Reller, a spokesman for the National Federation of Independent Business, a small-business lobby, said

emission. That figure is up from 82 percent in 2004, when the current salary threshold was set, and just 35 percent in 1975.

The cap has not kept up with inflation, administration officials say. It was \$250 in 1975, equivalent to roughly \$1,000 today, or more than double the current cap. The president's order does not prescribe a new salary threshold, and it does not take effect immediately. Instead, he has instructed Labor Secretary Thomas E. Perez to come up with a plan that would expand the number of workers eligible for overtime pay. During a period of public comment, business groups will almost surely seek to pare it back by limiting the number of employees who might benefit from the change. □

Gay couples seek Florida marriage recognition



Howard Simon, Executive Director American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, gestures as he announces that eight gay couples and the ACLU have filed a federal lawsuit seeking to force Florida to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states, in Miami Beach, Fla., Thursday, March 13, 2014. The lawsuit names Gov. Rick Scott and other top Florida officials. It asks a judge to declare Florida's refusal to recognize same-sex marriages as unconstitutional. The lawsuit also wants a ruling requiring the state to recognize the marriages.

CURT ANDERSON
AP Legal Affairs Writer

MIAMI BEACH, Florida (AP)

— Eight gay couples and a top civil rights group have sued the state of Florida, arguing it is discriminating against the couples by not recognizing same-sex marriages performed in states where they are legal.

The lawsuit is among the

latest in a surge of challenges in America's divisive gay marriage debate. Within the last 30 days, lawsuits similar to the one in Florida have been filed in Alabama, Indiana and Arizona. In Kentucky, a federal judge ordered the state to recognize same-sex marriages performed legally in other states and countries.

(AP Photo/Alan Diaz)

Lawsuits have also been filed in Florida, Arizona, Kentucky and elsewhere challenging state bans on gay marriage. Seventeen states and Washington, D.C., allow gay marriage. Sandra Newson, who is a plaintiff in the Florida lawsuit with her wife Denise Hueso, said the couple moved to Massachusetts from Miami so they

could get married in 2009. They adopted a son, now 15, who has cerebral palsy and they decided to move back to Florida, where they had more family to help care for him.

When they moved back, they lost legal recognition of their marriage and began encountering difficulties, such as having to prove they are their son's parents during hospital stays and battling auto insurance companies for seemingly mundane things such as the marriage discount.

Newson said current Florida law undermines the commitment she and her partner made to each other.

Howard Simon, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, said same-sex couples suffer discrimination in many ways. Examples include problems getting spouses covered by health insurance, difficulties with inheritance rules and retire-

ment benefits, and problems with workers' compensation benefits.

"There is no rational reason for the discrimination that Florida inflicts on married couples," Simon said.

The lawsuit, filed late Wednesday in federal court, names Gov. Rick Scott and other top Florida officials. It asks a judge to declare Florida's refusal to recognize same-sex marriages as an unconstitutional violation of equal protection and due process rights, said ACLU attorney Daniel Tilley. The lawsuit also asks for a ruling requiring the state to recognize the marriages performed elsewhere. Scott, a Republican, issued a statement saying he supports Florida's constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman, but added that he "does not believe that anyone should be discriminated against for any reason." □

Fed nominees signal support for current economic policy

MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP)—Three nominees for the Federal Reserve's board expressed their support Thursday for the Fed's efforts to bolster the U.S. economy. Their comments suggested that the Fed's low-interest-rate policies will continue if they win confirmation.

Stanley Fischer, who has been nominated to be vice chairman; Lael Brainard, a former Treasury undersecretary; and Jerome Powell, a current board member who has been nominated for another term, all endorsed the Fed's current policy stance under Chair Janet Yellen during a confirmation hearing before the Senate Banking Committee.

The committee chairman, Tim Johnson, described the three as "well qualified" and said it was important that the Senate confirm the nominees quickly to fill vacancies on the Fed's seven-member board.

The three nominations were announced by President Barack Obama in January. His selections could reshape the Fed's seven-member board under Yellen. She took over on Feb. 3, succeeding Ben Bernanke, who stepped down after eight years as chairman. Next week, Yellen will preside over her first policy meeting as Fed chair and will hold a news conference afterward.

Fischer, a former head of the Bank of Israel, would replace Yellen in the Fed's No. 2 job.

"Achievement of both maximum employment and price stability requires the continuation of an expansionary monetary policy, even though the degree of expansion is being gradually and cautiously cut back," Fischer told the committee. Fischer, a dual citizen of the United States and Israel, was a longtime professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. □

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Death toll in NYC gas explosion climbs to 8

JONATHAN LEMIRE

VERENA DOBNIK

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Rescue workers using dogs and thermal-detection gear to search rubble for more

water mains, some from the 1800s.

At least five people were unaccounted for after the deafening blast Wednesday morning destroyed two five-story East Harlem

plagued in recent days or weeks by strong gas odors, as some tenants claimed, they have no evidence anyone reported it before Wednesday.

National Transportation

punctures or ruptures. They had not been torn from the ground, he said.

However, he said NTSB investigators had been unable to conduct a fuller examination because of the rescue effort underway, and it was unclear whether the leak came from inside or outside the buildings. He said there had also been a water main break at the site, but it was unknown if that contributed to the gas explosion or was caused by it. The water main was installed in 1897, according to the city.

Authorities also hoped to reach the basement — still under rubble — to examine heating units, meters and other equipment that might hold clues to the blast, fire department Commissioner

Salvatore Cassano said.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said: "We can only get conclusive evidence when the fire is out, when the rescue is completed, and we really get a chance to look at all the facts."

Aging infrastructure — crumbling bridges, highways, water mains and gas lines — has become a major concern in recent years, especially in older cities in the Northeast, and has been blamed for explosions, floods and other accidents.

"We know this is a fundamental challenge for New York City and any older city," de Blasio said. But he said the federal government needs to provide more aid to cities to deal with the problem. □



Firefighters continue to investigate and remove debris from an explosion, Thursday, March 13, 2014 in New York. Rescuers working amid gusty winds, cold temperatures and billowing smoke pulled four additional bodies Thursday from the rubble of two New York City apartment buildings, raising the death toll to at least eight from a gas leak-triggered explosion that reduced the area to a pile of smashed bricks, splinters and mangled metal. The explosion Wednesday morning in Manhattan's East Harlem injured more than 60 people.

(AP Photo/Julio Cortez)

victims of a gas explosion found an eighth body on Thursday while investigators tried to pinpoint the leak and determine whether it had anything to do with the city's aging gas and

apartment buildings that were served by an 1887 cast-iron gas main. More than 60 people were injured.

Fire and utility officials said that if the buildings were

Safety Board team member Robert Sumwalt said the gas main and distribution pipe under the street had been examined in a crater and were found to be intact, with no obvious

2 confirmed dead after music festival

© 2014 New York Times

AUSTIN, Texas - Two people were killed and at least 23 others were injured early Thursday at the South by Southwest festival when a driver evading arrest slammed his car into vehicles, a bicyclist and pedestrians walking along crowded streets, police said.

Two of the injured were in critical condition, authorities said.

The Austin police chief, Art Acevedo, told reporters that officers watching for drunken drivers had tried to stop the motorist about 12:30 a.m. outside a service station near the nightclubs and other venues that were hosting events related to the annual cultural

and technology festival.

But the driver suddenly sped off, Acevedo said, heading the wrong way down Ninth Street, a one-way street in downtown Austin, before turning onto Red River Street, where he rammed through a police barricade and struck a moped, a bicyclist and a taxi, in addition to hitting the pedestrians. A police officer stationed at the barricade narrowly avoided injury.

The driver was being chased by a police car with flashing lights and siren at the time.

After driving onto a sidewalk and striking a van, Acevedo said, the driver attempted to flee on foot before he was caught. The

man resisted arrest, police said, and the officer used a Taser to subdue him.

Police initially said that the two people on the moped had been killed, but authorities later said that a female passenger on the moped had been killed and that the driver had suffered injuries that were not life-threatening. The second fatality was the bicyclist, who was visiting from the Netherlands, police said.

The names of the driver and the victims have not yet been released.

Acevedo said he expected that the driver would face capital murder charges. "He showed no regard for the human beings he plowed through," the chief said. □

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Marijuana job fair held in Denver

DONNA BRYSON
Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — When Tim Cullen was opening his first marijuana business four years ago, the high school biology teacher turned pot entrepreneur struggled to get resumes and references from job applicants.

"Everyone's experience was on the black market," Cullen said. Now, he said, "it's come out of the closet."

Out of the closet, down the street and around the corner. That's where the line of hopefuls stretched Thursday outside a central Denver office building that was hosting a marijuana industry job fair.

Cullen, who owns two retail marijuana shops and is a partner in a company that makes hash oil and another that makes vaporizers, was among representatives from about a dozen businesses reviewing applications.

OpenVAPE, Cullen's vaporizers company, organized the fair to meet its own growing staffing needs and help others in

the industry, said company spokesman Todd Mitchem. Voters in Colorado and Washington approved sales of marijuana for recreational use in 2012, and

marijuana taxes in January; that is expected to grow as more retailers are licensed. Among the employers at Thursday's job fair was a tour company looking for



Grace Sisti of Colorado Harvest and Evergreen Apothecary meets job seekers attending a marijuana industry job fair hosted by Open Vape, a vaporizer company, in Downtown Denver, Thursday March 13, 2014. Organized to help meet growing staffing needs in the industry, the fair was attended by prospective employers ranging from marijuana retail stores and edible manufacturers, to cannabis tour companies and even a pot-specific marketing agency.

(AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

recreational sales began first in Colorado, in January. This week, in the world's first such accounting, the Colorado Department of Revenue reported the state made roughly \$2 million in

guides to help pot tourists navigate Colorado's newest industry. Hemp Temps, a specialist staffing agency, and Medicine Man, a dispensary, were also hunting for candidates. □



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IMF warns income disparities can damage world economies

C. S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The International Monetary Fund warned Thursday that wide income inequality can slow economic growth and is proposing ways to reduce it. Its recommendations include: Raising property taxes. Taxing the rich more than others. Raising the eligibility age for government retirement programs. Such proposals have typically encountered stiff opposition from policymakers. IMF officials say it is up to individual countries to decide whether and how to try to reduce income disparities. But if they do, its report released Thursday highlights ways it says governments can use tax and spending policies to reduce inequality without inhibiting growth.

The proposals are the latest sign of the IMF's growing concern about income inequality. It's an unusual focus for a global lending organization best-known for providing loans paired with strict budget cuts.

Thursday's report puts the weight of the IMF behind the notion that large wealth gaps can depress growth, a move welcomed by advocacy groups for emerging economies.

Similarly, a survey by The Associated Press late last year found that a majority of economists think income inequality in the United States is weakening its economy. Middle-income consumers are more likely to spend extra income than wealthier households are. As a result, stagnant middle-class income can depress consumer spending and overall growth.

"The IMF is coming kind of late to the party in terms of worrying about inequality and what can be done about it," said Nancy Birdsall, president of the Center for Global Development.

"But they are a big player, so we're glad they came to the party."

Inequality has worsened in most countries in the past three decades, the report said. In the United States, the share of income that's gone to the richest 1 percent surged to 19 percent in 2012 from 8 percent in 1980, the IMF's report noted.

Similar gains have occurred in other "English-speaking countries," the report said, and in China and India. By contrast, the share of income that's gone to the top 1 percent in Europe and Japan has scarcely risen.

Income disparities are fueling rising concern around the world and protests in countries such as Brazil and Turkey. Many countries have sought the IMF's help in addressing the issue, the report said.

Government tax and spending policies can be effective in reducing inequality, the report said. Such policies have lowered the income gap by an average of one-third in advanced economies, mostly because of money transferred to the poorest households.

Last month, an IMF research paper concluded that countries with steep income inequality were more likely to have briefer and weaker periods of economic growth.

It also argued that efforts to redistribute income don't necessarily hinder economic expansion.

That runs counter to traditional thinking, which generally assumes a trade-off between economic growth and efforts to reduce inequality. Under this view, a higher tax rate on the wealthy or higher spending on social welfare, while it may reduce income inequality, would likely depress growth.

Christine Lagarde, the IMF's managing director, said last month that income inequality "can have pernicious effects" and that "careful design of tax and spending policies can help reduce inequality." □



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US Financial Front:

Trade group reports Americans spent \$56B on pets

SUE MANNING
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Americans spent an all-time high of \$55.7 billion on their pets in last year and spending will creep close to \$60 billion this year, an industry spokesman said Thursday. Pets across America live like little humans these days — and as long as people treat them that way, pet spending should keep climbing, said Bob Vetere, the president and CEO of the American Pet Products Association. Overall pet spending has not dipped since record-keeping started, according to APPA, based in Greenwich, Connecticut.

The biggest part of spending in 2013 — \$21.57 billion — went for food — a lot of it more expensive, healthier grub, Vetere told buyers and exhibitors at the Global Pet Expo in Orlando, Florida. The not-for-profit trade association has been tracking industry figures since 1996, when total pet spending was just \$21 billion. Adjusted for inflation, that's \$31.3 billion.

The humanization of our pets started about 20 years ago, Vetere said in a telephone interview. As people made pets more important parts of their families, manufacturers introduced products that, in the beginning, helped the animals make their move from the backyard to the front room.

He said older Americans are largely feeding the industry's growth, looking to their pets to fill the void left by their children who have grown and moved away from home.

People have always spent more on food than any other pet spending cat-

egory and pet food trends follow human food and diet trends, he said.

That means if you are on a health kick, chances are your pet is too.

And if humans find a product that works for them, they will look for and demand the same for their pets, he said.

These foods are more expensive, but owners see their pets as "furry, winged and finny extensions of their family," Vetere said, noting that it didn't matter if the pets were dogs, cats, bird, fishes, horses or something else.

Sales numbers show owners are buying more age-specific, breed-specific, vitamin-infused or additive-enhanced foods, Vetere said.

The health of people also plays a role in the robust outlook for the industry's future, Vetere said. "The body of science validating that pets are good for us is growing with strong research in numerous areas of health," he said.

Other spending included \$14.37 billion for veterinary care; \$13.14 billion for supplies and over-the-counter medicines; \$2.23 billion for live animal purchases; and \$4.41 billion for other services. Those services which include grooming, boarding, training and pet-sitting, grew by the largest percentage last year — 6.1 percent.

Health and wellness products, supplies and over-the-counter medications — which grew by 7.4 percent in 2012 — grew only 3.9 percent in 2013, Vetere said. Sales of live animals — everything except dogs and cats — has fallen off in the past few years, Vetere said. □



Store co-owner Janene Zakrajsek feeds a dog a gourmet meal at the Pussy & Pooch Pet Lifestyle Center store in Beverly Hills, Calif. An industry spokesman said Americans spent an all-time high of \$55.7 billion on their pets in 2013 and will creep close to \$60 billion this year on Thursday, March 13, 2014.

(AP Photo/Nick Ut)

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Missing jet creates legion of armchair sleuths

SCOTT MAYEROWITZ

AP Airlines Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — There aren't supposed to be any mysteries in the Digital Age. The answers to most questions, it seems, can be found using Google or Twitter. So, maybe that's why the world is captivated by the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 and why it has created a legion of armchair sleuths, spouting theories in some cases so strange they belong in science-fiction films.

Casual conversations in supermarket aisles, barbershop chairs and office building cafeterias have centered on the mystery and how much we don't know. With the search for the missing Boeing 777 entering its seventh day, the passengers' families are left without closure while the intrigue — and hypotheses — continue to grow for the rest of us.

"We're fascinated by it. We don't know what happened and we hope for a miracle," says John DiScala, who runs the travel advice site JohnnyJet.com. "People want an answer

and the suspense is killing them."

Normally, travelers turn to DiScala for the latest deals on flights. But this week, he says, a page on his website dedicated to the latest news about the flight has received most of the attention.

The pros are just as perplexed. On TV and in online forums, aviation experts are more measured and analytical than the amateurs but in the end can't say with any certainty what happened.

With no distress call, no sign of wreckage and very few answers, the disappearance of the Malaysia Airlines plane is turning into one of the biggest aviation mysteries since Amelia Earhart vanished over the Pacific Ocean in 1937.

"Anybody who travels is intrigued with this story. How can a plane disappear? We've got satellites beaming down on everybody ..." says Andrea Richard, a French-American in Paris who travels widely, including to Asia.

Theories abound. Some are serious: there was a

catastrophic failure in the airframe or engines or there might have been a pilot error. Other ideas are the kinds to be found in science fiction movies: a new Bermuda Triangle, an alien abduction or something out of the Twilight Zone. Terrorism isn't suspected but hasn't been ruled out either. But some people have come up with elaborate plots worthy of a James Bond villain where the plane is hijacked and

plane crash to learn definitively what happened.

That's an anomaly in an age of instant answers. If something isn't known, we just Google it. If we are lost, we use the GPS on our smartphones to find our location. And if our flight is delayed, even five minutes, the airline sends us a text message.

In this situation — to everybody's frustration — we still don't have a conclusion. Popular TV shows like "Lost,"

victims' families of July's Asiana Airlines crash in San Francisco. "It becomes like a murder mystery almost, these clues that you're getting and trying to piece it together in a way that makes technical and logical sense." Airlines and their employees don't like to talk about crashes. It's not in their nature. Instead, they defer to the crash investigators. Part of it is that they have nothing to gain by speaking and part of it



Vietnamese Air Force Col. Pham Minh Tuan uses binoculars on board a flying aircraft during a mission to search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 in the Gulf of Thailand, Thursday, March 13, 2014. With no distress call, no sign of wreckage and very few answers, the disappearance of the Malaysia Airlines plane is turning into one of the biggest aviation mysteries since Amelia Earhart vanished over the Pacific Ocean in 1937.

(AP Photo)

lands on a remote island, undetected by radar.

Others have sat in their homes or offices scouring new commercial satellite images of the ocean, looking for any debris from the plane. False leads and conflicting information have only added to the mystery, the speculation and the frustration. It's still unclear how far the plane may have flown after losing contact with civilian radar — and in which direction. On Thursday, planes were sent to search an area off the southern tip of Vietnam where Chinese satellite images released by the Chinese government reportedly showed floating objects believed to be part of the plane. Nothing turned up.

Even if the plane is found soon, the speculation likely won't fade. It can take months, if not years, after a

or movies like "Alive" or "Castaway," where people survive a plane crash only to have the rest of the world give up on them, just feed the curiosity. (Note: It was a Boeing 777 that disappeared over the Pacific in "Lost.") "This feeds into everyone's fear of flying. It's one thing for people to have a fear of dying in a plane crash. It's another one to die in a plane crash and never be found," says Phil Derner, founder of the aviation enthusiast website NYC Aviation. Those within the aviation industry are enthralled with the mystery too, but from a much more methodical, scientific viewpoint.

"There's a lot of head scratching going on," says Daniel O. Rose, a partner with the aviation accident law firm Kreindler & Kreindler LLP, which is representing the survivors and

is superstition. Jason Rabinowitz, a self-proclaimed aviation geek whose hobby includes snapping photographs of airplanes taking off and landing, said those within the industry are bringing up previous incidents and previous searches "rather than clinging to straws."

Normally, aviation experts have their theories and stick to their guns. This time, he said, people are throwing out theories left and right only to have other experts shoot them down.

"The aviation community is more puzzled than the general population because we know more of what would cause an accident and we still have no clue," Rabinowitz says. "I keep going to sleep every night and hoping that I wake up with some shred of good news but it isn't happening." □

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Rockets strike Israel, jeopardizing truce talk

IBRAHIM BARZAK
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad said Thursday it had agreed to halt a wave of rocket fire on Israel, signaling an end to the heaviest fighting between the sides since 2012, though soon after the announcement seven rockets fired from Gaza exploded inside Israel.

The Islamic Jihad denied it launched the attack and it wasn't immediately unclear who fired the rockets. Cease-fire declarations have not always been honored by militants and the barrage raised doubts about the cease-fire offer made by Islamic Jihad.

The Israeli military said militants fired at least seven rockets Thursday from Gaza, with most coming in the evening after the cease-fire claim. It said its "Iron Dome" defense system intercepted one rocket. Israeli officials previously refused to confirm any cease-fire deal was in place.

In two days of violence, militants fired some 70 rockets into Israel, while Israel has carried out a series of airstrikes in Gaza. No serious casualties have been reported.

Islamic Jihad leader Khaled al-Batsh announced Thursday that his group had accepted an Egyptian-brokered plan to stop its attacks, if Israel agreed to a truce as well.

"After the Egyptian brothers initiated contacts with us in the past few hours, we agreed to restore the calm," said Khaled al-Batsh, the group's leader in Gaza. "As long as the occupation (Israel) honors the calm, we will honor the calm and instructions are

being given right now to al-Quds brigades, our military wing, about this understanding."

A senior security official in Egypt, which has brokered similar truces in the past, said Egyptian intelligence officials had been in touch with the sides and brokered an agreement. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to journalists.

Earlier Thursday, the Iranian-backed Islamic Jihad resumed rocket fire toward Israel, striking the outskirts of two major cities. A day earlier, it fired dozens of rockets in the largest barrage on Israel since an eight-day Israeli offensive in late 2012.

The Israeli military said it retaliated with renewed airstrikes on "seven terror sites" in southern Gaza.

"Since yesterday, there has seen a substantial deterioration in the safety of the residents in southern

Israel. We have responded and will continue to do so in order to eliminate threats as they develop," said Lt. Col. Peter Lerner, a military spokesman.

The early morning rocket attacks from Gaza set

off air-raid sirens in the southern cities of Ashdod and Ashkelon. The rockets landed in open areas, but flew deeper into Israel than Wednesday's attacks, which struck southern Israeli border towns.

Islamic Jihad said it resumed their rocket fire in response to what they say are Israeli violations of a cease-fire, including an airstrike that killed three Islamic Jihad militants earlier this week. □



An Israeli is positioned at the Israel and Gaza border on Thursday, March 13, 2014. Gaza militants resumed rocket fire toward Israel on Thursday, striking the outskirts of two major cities a day after launching the largest barrage since an eight-day Israeli offensive in late 2012. Israel has responded with a series of airstrikes on militant targets.

(AP Photo/Tsafrir Abayov)

Feud erupts between Palestinian leader, arch foe

Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)

— A long-running feud between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and a powerful former operative in his Fatah movement has burst into the open, with Abbas accusing him of deceit, corruption and selling out Palestinian national interests to foreign powers.

In a speech to Fatah leaders this week, Abbas also insinuated that exiled foe Mohammed Dahlan, who appears to have renewed leadership ambitions, could have played a role in the mysterious 2004 death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Abbas' hour-long laundry list of accusations against

Dahlan — delivered to a closed-door meeting Monday but later released publicly — signaled that the battle over who will succeed the 79-year-old Palestinian president is heating up. Dahlan, 52, responded Thursday, writing on his Facebook page that Abbas' speech was "full of lies and deception."

Fatah is known for epic internal feuds, but Abbas' speech marked the first time he entered the fray so publicly. Abbas said Dahlan would never be allowed to return to Fatah and suggested there is no room in the party for those still loyal to the former Gaza strongman.

Abbas' offensive against

Dahlan could backfire by drawing new attention to long-standing allegations of top-level corruption in the Palestinian leadership. It also raised questions about why Abbas kept Dahlan on as his right-hand man if he believed his then-protégé had been involved in major corruption and sold out Palestinian interests to the U.S. and Israel, as Abbas now claims.

Abbas banished Dahlan in 2010, after Dahlan purportedly called him weak and criticized Abbas' two adult sons. Dahlan has since spent his time shuttling between Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

In an interview with The Associated Press last month,

Dahlan spoke of his aid projects in his native Gaza Strip and in Lebanon, fueled by millions in Gulf aid dollars that are his to distribute. He described his close ties with Egypt's military leaders and spoke of his conviction that Abbas left the Palestinian national cause in tatters.

Dahlan said at the time he is "not looking for any post" after Abbas retires, but called for new elections and an overhaul of Fatah. Abbas was elected in 2005, but overstayed his five-year term because a split between Fatah and the Islamic militant Hamas, which seized Gaza from Abbas in 2007, had prevented new elections. □

Candidate starts campaign to replace Toronto mayor

ROB GILLIES
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — A left-leaning politician popular in liberal downtown Toronto kicked off her campaign to replace Rob Ford on Thursday, setting up a showdown with the conservative mayor who vows he will win despite the drug scandal engulfing him.

But she said the mayor has disappointed his city. "The current mayor is failing at his job, and he is no role model for my granddaughters," Chow said at a packed church hall. "We deserve better. It's time for a change."

A Hong Kong native who immigrated to Canada when she was 13, Chow is

to resign since admitting to smoking crack cocaine last year. The Toronto City Council stripped him of most of his powers in an effort to isolate him but it lacked the authority to force him out.

Ford has said he is not concerned about the challenge from Chow, whose candidacy was widely

Chow, 56, and her late husband formed a political power couple for decades. The NDP, a union-backed party with socialist roots, took Canadians by surprise in the May 2011 federal election by winning official opposition status for the first time, sidelining the long-dominant Liberal Party. Many credited Layton's

Promising to keep Toronto's budget balanced, as required by law, Chow said her humble upbringing taught her about the value of money and working hard. She said her mother worked as maid and her father struggled to find work in his new country. But she said she was served well by Toronto's public schools, hospitals, libraries and public transit.

Ford has said Chow is even more left leaning than his predecessor, David Miller, who critics said over spent on programs favored by downtowners — arts and culture projects and expanded bike lanes.

Ford's promises to slash spending, cut taxes and end what he called "the war on the car" gained him a loyal following in the suburbs that came to be known as "Ford Nation."

The competing interests of the suburbs and the core of Toronto have their roots in a 1998 amalgamation forced on the metropolitan area by the Conservative provincial government. Toronto, with a population of about 700,000, was merged against its will with five of its neighboring municipalities, creating a mega-city that now has 2.7 million residents.

An electoral map of the 2010 mayoral election shows that Ford's voter base resides mainly in those former suburbs. Overall, it's a more conservative constituency than the downtown electorate, encompassing many immigrants and abounding with commuters who rely on their cars rather than Toronto's less-than-comprehensive public transit system.

Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto, said Ford cannot be dismissed as a contender. But he said the drug scandal — a major issue even in Ford's home suburb of Etobicoke — will wear on him during the campaign.

The mayor also faces a strong challenge from John Tory, a one-time Ontario provincial Progressive Conservative leader. □



Olivia Chow speaks to the media after she officially entered into the race as a candidate for Mayor in the fall Toronto mayoral election in Toronto on Thursday, March 13, 2014. A day after resigning as an NDP member of Parliament, Chow emphasized her humble beginnings and her family's hardworking immigrant story in her speech to a packed church in the inner city neighborhood of St. James Town, where she grew up.

(AP Photo/Nathan Denette)

Olivia Chow, who resigned from her Parliament seat earlier this week ahead of her campaign launch, made no mention during her speech of the incidents of drug use, drunken public appearances and erratic behavior that have given Ford international notoriety.

the widow of Jack Layton, the leader of the leftist New Democrat party who died of cancer in 2011. She is the only prominent left-leaning candidate in a crowded field of right-of center contenders in the Oct. 27 election.

Ford has rebuffed pressure

expected. He insists he remains highly popular in Toronto's working-class conservative suburbs, which carried him to victory in 2010, galvanized by his promise to shake things up at a City Hall he said was dominated by free-spending liberal elites.

charisma and popularity. He died a few months later. Chow, a former Toronto city councilor who has spent 26 years in politics, emphasized her immigrant roots during her speech, dismissing attacks from the Ford camp that she will spend recklessly if elected mayor.

Pope marks anniversary: "Please pray for me."

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis marked his one-year anniversary Thursday with a simple tweet: "Please pray for me."

Francis' appeal echoed his gesture on that rainy night one year ago when he came out onto the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica and introduced himself to the

world. Rather than impart a blessing on the crowd below, Francis asked first for a "favor," asking the crowd to bless him.

Francis has continued to ask for prayers, ending nearly each appearance with a similar request.

Francis spent his anniversary tucked away on retreat

south of Rome with senior Vatican cardinals and monsignors. The Vatican said nothing special was planned, just prayer and meditations.

But in his hometown of Buenos Aires, Argentines were celebrating, particularly the poor who live in the "misery villages" of the

capital where the former Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio ministered as archbishop. In the Villa 1-11-14 slum, a huge screen was set up for residents to watch an interview Francis gave recently to FM Bajo Flores, a community radio station that broadcasts from the slum. □



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Venezuelan president calls for stepped-up security

FABIOLA SANCHEZ

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela

(AP) — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro announced Thursday that six

people had been arrested after the National Guard searched the central city of Valencia for those responsible for the previous day's violence that left three dead.

Multiple outbreaks of shooting in Valencia on Wednesday killed a university student, a man painting his house and a National Guard captain.

"We have proceeded to search the places (in Valencia) where these bandits were hidden and we have six prisoners," Maduro said in a telephone call carried by state television. He did not offer any details about those in custody, but said the searches turned up "weapons, C-4 (plastic explosives), bombs."

Maduro decided during a meeting with his security Cabinet to step up security operations in areas where violence has erupted, Communications Minister Delcy Rodriguez said in a Twitter message.

Student-led protests have occurred daily in various cities the past month, joined by large numbers of Venezuelans upset with inflation that reached 56 percent last year, the scarcity of some basic items such as flour and cooking oil, and one of the highest homicide rates in the world.

The government says the unrest has left at least 25 dead since Feb. 12, while Venezuelan state prosecutor Luisa Ortega Diaz said Thursday that 28 have died, without revealing the additional cases.

Maj. Gen. Vladimir Padrino Lopez, chief of the Stra-

tegic Operational Command, said on state television that security forces would continue securing areas in Valencia.

"We're designing new methods to deal with this attack," Padrino Lopez said. "It's already converting into an armed terrorist

insurgency."

He said members of the judicial police were attacked Thursday by people with high-caliber weapons,

but he did not mention any casualties.

Opposition leaders and protesters painted a much different picture.

Valencia Mayor Miguel Cocchiola, an opposition politician, said there are "videos, proof" that corroborate witness accounts that armed pro-government groups known as "colectivos" were involved in Wednesday's shootings. He said he supported any searches that would aid in the investigation.

University student Jesus Enrique Acosta, 22, and resident Guillermo Sanchez, 42, were shot Wednesday in the working class neighborhood of La Isabelica, which has seen continuing demonstrations against the government. Residents there face rising unemployment following the closure of some businesses unable to continue operations in Venezuela's faltering economy. □



A demonstrator is evacuated after being injured in the leg during clashes at an antigovernment protest in Caracas, Venezuela. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro announced Thursday that six people had been arrested after the National Guard searched the central city of Valencia for those responsible for the previous day's violence that left three dead.

(AP Photo/Alejandro Cegarra)

9 arrested in attack on Hong Kong journalist

CHRIS BUCKLEY

ALAN WONG

© 2014 New York Times

The Hong Kong police claimed a breakthrough Wednesday in the investigation of a brutal attack on a prominent newspaper editor that sent chills through the territory's journalists. The two men suspected of carrying out the attack were caught across the border in mainland China, and seven possible accomplices were arrested in Hong Kong, the territory's police commissioner said.

The victim of the attack, Kevin Lau Chun-to, welcomed the arrests but criticized the commissioner's suggestion that the attack may have had nothing to do with Lau's previous job

as the chief editor of Ming Pao, a Chinese-language broadsheet with a strong record of investigative journalism.

In outlining the capture of the nine men, the Hong Kong police commissioner, Tsang Wai-hung, left many questions unanswered about the people and motives behind the attack. He said that the two main suspects were believed to be members of a triad, or organized crime syndicate, and suggested that Lau's journalism might not have been the reason for the streetside assault. Lau was badly wounded and remains hospitalized. At least some of the seven men arrested as suspected accomplices also appeared to be triad mem-

bers, Tsang said.

He declined to give the names of the suspects but said both were 37-year-old Hong Kong residents. "We will not rule out any motive - any motive - at the moment, but according to information in hand, there is nothing to tie this directly to the journalistic work," he said.

Lau was walking from his car in late February when a man stepped off a motorcycle and used a cleaver to repeatedly slash deeply into Lau's back and legs. The attacker hopped back on the waiting motorcycle, and Hong Kong investigators concluded that he and the accompanying bike rider fled across the border into the mainland.

Lau and the newspaper he edited were already a focus of concerns that political and commercial pressures from mainland China had been stifling press freedom in Hong Kong, and the attack prompted an outcry from the Hong Kong news media, as well as a street protest. In January, Lau was abruptly removed from his post as chief editor of Ming Pao, drawing accusations from employees and other Hong Kong journalists that he had been sacrificed by the paper's owners to fend off pressure from the mainland authorities and their supporters. The paper's owners denied that. But the dispute gave the attack on Lau all the more prominence. □

Demand grows for halal food as industry evolves

AYA BATRAWY

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The global industry for halal food and lifestyle products — ones that meet Islamic law standards of manufacture — is estimated to be worth hundreds of billions of dollars and is multiplying as Muslim populations grow. Producers outside the Muslim world, from Brazil to the U.S. and Australia, are eager to tap into the market.

The United Arab Emirates is positioning itself to be their gateway, part of its push

for halal manufacturers was driven by the increased demand locally and internationally for such products. "This industry itself, we know it is growing," Belhoul told The Associated Press. He said the industry is expected to double in terms of value within five years. "So we think there is a lot of opportunity... and we need to capitalize on this."

The world's Muslim population is estimated at around 1.6 billion, and the majority is believed to adhere to or prefer to adhere to halal products when possible.

permissible and what is not. Despite attempts by international Islamic bodies, such as the World Halal Food Council, to achieve worldwide guidelines, there are no global standards for halal certifications.

Stricter interpreters of Shariah say chicken must be slaughtered by hand to be considered halal. Others say it is acceptable if the chicken is slaughtered by machine, as is the case in much of the fast-paced food industry around the world. To accommodate various Muslim consumers,

Islamic organizations in the exporting country.

This is where organizations such as Halal Control in Germany have an important role to play, said General Manager Mahmoud Tatari. He said that when the company started 14 years ago in Europe, there was little awareness or demand for halal products. Today, Halal Control has 12 Islamic scholars who offer guidance on certifications to international companies such as Nestle and Unilever who want to do business in the Muslim world.

take maybe now five to 10 years (until) we can more safely eat halal," he said.

Malaysia is the global leader in developing the halal industry and putting forth the highest standards, said Tatari and others in the industry.

Malaysia exported \$9.8 billion worth of halal products in 2013, the Oxford Business Group said. That makes it one of the largest suppliers in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, an international group with 57 members.

U.S. manufacturers, such as Kellogg's and Hershey, plan to build halal-compliant plants in Malaysia. The Oxford Business Group says Indonesia, with the world's largest Muslim population, plans to establish a center for the halal industry in 2015. In Thailand, more than a quarter of food factories are already making halal products.

But it is in the Gulf, where countries almost entirely rely on food imports, where the halal industry seems to have the biggest potential for growth in the coming years.

Brazil is the world's second top exporter of meat and poultry to Muslim-majority countries after the U.S. The Brasil Food Company, which is among the world's largest food companies, plans to open its first manufacturing site in the Middle East in UAE's capital, Abu Dhabi, in June. The factory will process poultry from Brazil for repackaging and shipping to other countries.

"Having the factory will allow us to be closer to the market and will allow us go to different markets that today we cannot export to from Brazil," BRF Quality Assurance Supervisor Tiago Brilhante said. The company already exports 70,000 tons of chicken to the Middle East each month, making the region its biggest export market.

Data-monitor, a company that provides market and data analysis, says halal food already accounts for about a fifth of world food trade, and the Muslim market is growing substantially. □



This photo shows a visitor talking with a representative of a halal food producer from Saudi Arabia during a halal food exhibition in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The global halal food and lifestyle industry is estimated to be worth hundreds of billions of dollars and is multiplying in size as Muslim populations around the world grow. Producers outside the Muslim world — from Brazil to the U.S. and Australia — are eager to tap into that market.

(AP Photo/Aya Batrawy)

to become a global center of Islamic business and finance.

UAE officials announced last month that the city of Dubai has dedicated around 6.7 million square feet of land in Dubai Industrial City for a "Halal Cluster" for manufacturing and logistic companies that deal in halal food, cosmetics and personal care items.

Dubai Industrial City CEO Abdullah Belhoul said the idea to create a zone just

The general understanding is that halal products should not be contaminated with pork or alcohol and that livestock is slaughtered in accordance with Islamic Shariah law. Similar to kosher practices, Islam requires the animal is killed with single slash to the throat while alive. It is intended as a way for animals to die swiftly and minimize their pain.

However, as with most issues in religion, opinions vary greatly over what is

several companies even specify on their packaging how the chicken was slaughtered.

Belhoul said that if halal products are manufactured in the UAE, they will need to be certified halal by the government body that oversees this. But, as with most countries, if the halal products, such as livestock or raw material, are being imported from abroad for processing in the UAE, then the stamp of approval comes from

Halal Control, which concentrates on products made in Europe, does not certify meat and poultry, but almost everything else from dairy products to food ingredients. Tatari said Muslims around the world may think they are eating halal-certified food, but that often raw materials may include alcohol or pork gelatin in candies and soups, or may have been cross-contaminated during production.

"It is a process and this will

LOCAL Aruba TODAY

At Casa del Mar:

An emotional farewell from Friends of the Handicapped



Continued from Front

The minister and the NGO representatives all praised the dedication and drive of Friends of the Handicapped Foundation members who sacrifices leisure and resources to improve the life of many people on Aruba. The do-good foundation members include Pauline Daley, from NY, the late Phil Solomon, Dave and Tania Ulmschneider, from Florida, Sal & Maryann La Carruba, who conducted the last check presentation, Patrick & Marsha Finch, from Florida, and from Aruba Anouchka Maduro and volunteer Marcelino Kock. Volunteer Huelette Marquette from Canada had been the main driver of the foundation's successful Superbowl fundraiser, for many years. With the retirement of Art Stark, and no succession, the foundation members decided to conclude their activities, and organized just one more check pre-

sentation, on March 14th. Over the years FOTH had raised and distributed over US\$1,000,000.00 to various organizations caring for the socially, physically and mentally handicapped residents of Aruba, with 100% of the proceeds given back each year at the end of the winter season, as FOTH members headed back to their homes.

In collaboration with CEDE Aruba, Centro pa Desarroyo Social di Arubano, the Center for Social Development of Aruba, who matched the total contribution and managed the funds, many foundation were helped over the years such as: Imeldahof, children's home, Funari, center for physically handicapped elderly, FEPO, Fundacion Respeta Mi, fighting child abuse, Fundashon pa nos Muchanan, Mi Por, Sonrisa, FALPA, Adopt and Addict, Epilepse, Thuiszorg Aruba, Trampolin pa Trabou, Koningin Wilhelmina Kanker Fonds, Ambiente Feliz, a home for mentally

challenged adults, Centro Kibrahacha, a social center for active retirees, age 60+, Fundacion Cas Marie, a day center for those suffering from Dementia or Alzheimer's Disease, Stichting Voor Verstandelijk Gahandicapten, Bibito Pin, a center for mentally challenged youngsters, Edmund Harms Foundation, providing hospice services to the terminally ill, Ambiente Nobo, a center for mentally challenged adults, Favi, a center for the visually impaired, Fundacion Autism Aruba, promoting understanding of autism, and two foundations fighting substance abuse, Fundacion Hacienda and Fundacion Eliezer. Everybody's sentiment was echoed in a beautiful poem read by Yolanda E. Leslie-Dieffenthaler, Bureaumedewerker Stichting of Fundacion Respeta Mi. She said: In today's busy world, it takes special persons, to take the time and make the effort, to reach out to others, in such kind and thoughtful ways... Fundacion Respeta Mi just want you to know, that we've all noticed, how you're always so willing, to



go that extra mile and do whatever it takes, to make someone else's life a little bit brighter. Your special blend of caring goes a long way toward proving there are still kindhearted people in this world people who seem to receive their greatest joy by sharing the best of themselves with others. Many thanks for helping Fundacion Respeta Mi to contribute to the prevention of child abuse in Aruba by means of YOUR generous project donations from 2002 up to 2014. Happy childhoods last a lifetime. Stop child abuse starts by helping prevent it.

Pictured here the check presentations to local NGOs, Minister Paul Croes' appreciation address, and special awards by the Ministry of Tourism honoring foundation members with the Emerald Ambassador commemorative coin. The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 35 or more consecutive years. CEDE Aruba also honored members of the foundation with custom-made commemorative pins, in appreciation of their selfless service. □



Gismo and the Aruba donkey Sanctuary can use your help!



BRINGAMOSA - We would like to introduce Gismo to you, one of the donkeys that has found a home at the Aruban Donkey Sanctuary. His mother was found wandering on a busy street two days before Gismo was born: a hazardous stunt that could have been fatal for the donkey as well as for drivers.

After he was born Gismo has spent his days in the company of his mother and sister Cymbi. By now he is a big boy, who is strutting conceitedly among

the rest of the group. In a few months' time, when he is one year old to be exact, this donkey will be castrated. That is necessary, unfortunately, to prevent inbreeding; another thing is that the donkey population should not grow out of bounds.

This beautiful donkey has been provided with a chip, just like all the other donkeys. On the chip is information about the donkey and its medical history. The donkeys at the sanctuary have a lot of friends with whom

they can play all day long. And they love living there: they are well-cared for, they are fed and watered and when they are sick the vet is called. Yes, they are expensive customers for the sanctuary.

The volunteers are trying to cover the various costs with all kinds of activities and the sale of great donkey memorabilia in the shop. Fortunately, there are also visitors who wish to adopt a donkey, who buy something at the donkey shop or who make a donation.

Thus they help support us. Everyone is welcome to visit the sanctuary, which has opening hours from 9 am until 4 pm and in the weekend from 10 am until 3. Entry is free of charge and one can enjoy a soft drink, a cup of coffee or a refreshing ice cream. The volunteers of the sanctuary are hoping that somebody will adopt this friendly, lovely donkey. Of course the donkey will keep on living at the sanctuary; you only need to pay AWG. 30,- per month for the donkey's keep. With

this amount you help support the sanctuary as well as your own donkey. And you will receive a beautiful certificate and a super T-shirt and your name and photo will be posted on our website.

So please call the sanctuary at 593-2933; you can also register via the website www.arubandonkey.org or donate money on bank account number 40.03.025 at the Aruba Bank! Just do it! Would you like to follow the donkeys on Facebook: surf to Donkey Sanctuary Aruba please.□

Beauty On The Beach

Yadimi La Bastida

She is from Caracas Venezuela. This is her second visit to the island. She loves Aruba's Beaches.

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Arikok Park organizes 3rd national bird count on Tuesday, March 18

SAN FUEGO - Arikok National Park and Aruba Bird Life Conservation invite everybody to participate in the 3rd edition of the national bird count on March 18.

□ Participation is easy and can be done with the whole family in the comfort of your own backyard. The bird counting process should be done between 7 am-9 am on Tuesday morning of March 18.

Participation forms are available at the following locations: Arikok National Park's Visitor Center in San Fuego (daily from 8 am-4pm), Superfood, main post offices in Oranjestad and San Nicolas, Tri-bike, National libraries in Oranjestad and San Nicolas,

Botica Maria, Boticaweg-SeroePreto, Fort Zoutman and Santa Rosa. Very important, after the bird count, please drop off your filled out forms between March 19-28 at the locations mentioned above.

If you have an iPhone you can participate in the bird count via a free Taggird-App.

You can download this app in the iTunes store.

More information on more than 100 bird species in Aruba can be found on www.arubabirdlifeconservation.com. More information about the National Bird Count and how to participate is available at www.arubanationalpark.org.□

Distinguished Visitors honored at the Marriott Surf Club



PALM BEACH - Recently, David Elsbree & Lorraine Gilmore were honored as Distinguished Visitors after returning to Aruba for 10 years consecutive. The symbolic honorary title

is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for between 10-and 19 years consecutive. Ricardo Croes representing Aruba Tourism

Authority conducted the ceremony at the Marriott Surf Club. Lorraine commented that she will never change her vacation island for any other island.



Top reason for returning provided by the honorees were they consider Aruba to be the "Happy Island", the great weather, and Friendly Aruban Hospitality, white sand beaches and

the local food. On the pictures Mr. Croes from ATA together with David & Lorraine and hotel Rep. Jenny Boekhoudt at the Marriott Surf Club. □

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NBA Capsules

Nets get Heat again, win 96-95

MIAMI (AP) — Paul Pierce scored 17 of his 29 points in the third quarter and Mirza Teletovic scored 17 off the bench as the Brooklyn Nets beat Miami for the third time in as many games this season, topping the Heat 96-95 Wednesday.

Shaun Livingston scored 13 points, Andray Blatche added 11 and Deron Williams had eight assists for the Nets, who've won seven of their past eight games and are 23-9 since Jan. 1.

Chris Bosh scored 24 points for Miami, giving him 15,003 for his career. Dwyane Wade scored 22, LeBron James finished with 19 and Mario Chalmers scored 14 for the Heat.

CLIPPERS 111, WARRIORS 98

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Blake Griffin had 30 points and 15 rebounds, and Danny Granger added 18 points off the bench as Los Angeles surged past Golden State for its ninth straight victory.

Chris Paul had 16 points, 12 assists and eight rebounds for the Clippers, who split their four-game season series against their Pacific Division rivals with an impressive finish to a tight game.

Continued on Page 21



Brooklyn Nets forward Mirza Teletovic (33), of Bosnia, goes up for a shot during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Miami Heat, Wednesday, March 12, 2014 in Miami. Teletovic scored 17 off the bench as the Nets defeated Miami 96-95.

Associated Press

Dallas Stars' Peverley out of hospital, with teammates

FRISCO, Texas (AP) — Dallas Stars forward Rich Peverley is out of the hospital and spending time with his teammates three days after he collapsed on the bench during an NHL game.

The team said Peverley was released from St. Paul University Hospital in Dallas late Wednesday. He was

with the team during practice on Thursday at headquarters in suburban Frisco. Peverley is out for the season and will soon go to Cleveland for a procedure to fix an irregular heartbeat that was diagnosed in training camp. He collapsed during the first period on Monday against Columbus. The game was

Dallas Stars forward Rich Peverley, right, makes a statement regarding his health and the incident which occurred in a recent NHL game during a news conference at UT Southwestern Medical Center as coach Lindy Ruff looks on Wednesday, March 12, 2014, in Dallas. **Associated Press**

postponed. The 31-year-old decided not to have the procedure



after the diagnosis. He chose a less invasive adjustment and medication. Peverley missed a game last week when he didn't feel well. □



Carlos Alberto Betancur Gomez, of Colombia, celebrates on the podium after winning the fifth stage of the Paris-Nice cycling race, in Rive de Gier, central France, Thursday, March 13, 2014.

Associated Press

Carlos Betancur wins stage 5 of Paris-Nice

RIVE-DE-GIER, France (AP) — Carlos Betancur of Colombia won the fifth stage of the Paris-Nice race Thursday in a sprint to the line, while British rider Geraint Thomas retained the overall lead.

After the last of the stage's four small climbs, three riders pulled away near the end and Betancur easily beat Luxembourg rider Bob Jungels in a dash to the line. Jakob Fuglsang of Denmark finished third, with all three given the same time of 3 hours, 38 minutes, 15 seconds over the 153 kilometers (95 miles) from Creches-sur-Saone to Rive-de-Gier. "Yesterday, I attacked too early but today I felt good," Betancur said through a translator. "I lost a bit of time yesterday, but now I'm back in contention for the race."

In the overall standings, Thomas is three seconds ahead of German rider John Degenkolb, four ahead of Tom Jelte Slagter of the Netherlands, and five clear of Betancur.

French rider Nacer Bouhanni dropped out because of knee pains after in a crash of Sunday's first stage, which he won. □

Anderson, Raonic, Federer win at Indian Wells

BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

INDIAN WELLS, California

(AP) — Novak Djokovic rallied to beat Marin Cilic 1-6, 6-2, 6-3 in the fourth round of the BNP Paribas Open on Wednesday, avoiding the upsets that knocked out two other top-10 players.

Djokovic didn't face a break point on his serve after the first set in the baseline slugfest that ended after midnight PDT. He advanced to the quarterfinals against Julien Benneteau, a 6-3, 7-6 (4) winner over Feliciano Lopez.

"It was very tough. Marin was a far better player in the first 45 minutes. He was striking the ball incredibly well," said Djokovic, who improved to 8-0 against Cilic. "I tried to stay calm and composed and believe that I could come back." Kevin Anderson upset Australian Open champion Stan Wawrinka 7-6 (1), 4-6, 6-1, and sixth-ranked Andy Murray joined Wawrinka on the sidelines, losing to big-serving Milos Raonic, 4-6, 7-5, 6-3. Andy Murray joined Wawrinka on the sidelines, losing to the big-serving Raonic, 4-6, 7-5, 6-3. Raonic, a 23-year-old Canadian ranked 11th in the world, advanced to the quarterfinals against Alexandr Dolgopolov of Ukraine, who beat Fabio Fognini of Italy, 6-2, 6-4.

Anderson ended Wawrinka's 13-match winning streak that included his first Grand Slam title in January. Wawrinka didn't face a break point in his first two matches, but he got broken in his first service game against the 6-foot-8 Anderson, who had 11 aces and connected on 64 percent of his first serves.

"I was complaining a lot about my serve, about the way I was playing, and with that, I don't deserve to win



Jelena Jankovic, of Serbia, falls while trying to return a shot to Agnieszka Radwanska, of Poland, at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament, Wednesday, March 12, 2014, in Indian Wells, Calif.

Associated Press

matches," Wawrinka said. "I should have been more positive with myself, just trying to find solution because it was still a close match." After losing the first set tie-breaker, Wawrinka left the court for nearly eight minutes to have his back worked on. He returned and broke Anderson twice in taking the second set to even the match.

"It's just tightness," he said, insisting he wasn't injured. "I was a little bit nervous and tight and tired."

Anderson earned all four breaks in the third in completing his 150th career match win on the ATP Tour. "Game plan is just to get as many first serves back as possible just to give myself the best look in his serve games throughout the match," he said.

Anderson advanced to the quarterfinals against four-time tournament champion Roger Federer, who beat 11th-seeded Tommy Haas 6-4, 6-4.

Ernest Gulbis beat Roberto Bautista Agut 7-6 (7), 4-6, 6-2 to reach the quarterfinals. □

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Bode Miller targets return to racing next season

GRAHAM DUNBAR

AP Sports Writer

LENZERHEIDE, Switzerland

(AP) — Bode Miller wants to continue racing next season at the age of 37, even if this campaign left him disappointed.

A third-place run in a World Cup super-G on Thursday typified Miller's season: Fast and crowd-pleasing, but errors cost him victory.

"I'm frustrated and worn out right now but I think I have more to do in the sport," Miller said.

"I definitely am still competitive. If I can keep my body healthy then I think the plan is to race next year."

Miller's racing skills were clear when he became the oldest-ever Olympic Alpine medalist last month, taking bronze in super-G at Sochi. On a steep and technically demanding slope Thursday, no one was faster than Miller's speed check of 101.9 kph (63.3 mph).

Still, he came down 0.57 seconds behind surprise winner Alexis Pinturault, with another Frenchman, Thomas Mermillod Blondin, edging him by one-hundredth. "I had probably two and half seconds, three seconds, worth of mistakes, in that run," Miller insisted. "That is the way my season



Bode Miller, of the United States, speeds down the course on his way to take third place in a men's alpine skiing Super-G at the World Cup finals in Lenzerheide, Switzerland, Thursday, March 13, 2014.

Associated Press

has been. I have had to deal with that."

Miller took full responsibility for his race, and a World Cup season that has brought him four podium finishes but no addition to his 33 career victories.

"It has been such a frustrating time of so many near-misses and so many really bad, stupid mistakes that I can't blame anyone but myself for," he said.

That list includes his top priority races: The classic World Cup downhill at Kitzbuehel, Austria, in January and the Olympic downhill last month.

Miller finished third and eighth, respectively, when the best of his skiing was good enough to win, and his practice runs left some racers awe-struck.

Here on Wednesday, Miller's final downhill per-

formance this season followed the same pattern.

He led at the final time split — 0.30 faster than eventual winner Matthias Mayer of Austria, the Olympic champion — yet a mistake near the end took him wide into rough snow which slowed him.

"These errors aren't little bobbles, they are like borderline catastrophic," Miller explained. "(Wednesday)

I just got so broken down about halfway down the course I didn't even care anymore.

I wanted to stop. I didn't even really tuck through the finish line."

Even standing up straight, he still placed eighth just 0.62 back.

"I really wanted to change that today just because I think that's not the way to race," Miller acknowledged.

"I just wanted to really stay focused to push every hundredth out of it that I could, even though I knew I was going to be out of the course a few times."

"I felt good about battling through it," said the veteran racer, who has started a total of 32 World Cup and Olympics events this season after sitting out a year to recover from knee surgery.

One incentive for returning strong next season is to race at the Feb. 2-15 world championships in front of home fans at Vail-Beaver Creek, Colorado.

That's for next season, after the current campaign closes with a giant slalom on Saturday.

"Right now," Miller said, "I feel like I don't want to see ski boots for a little while." □



Germany's goalkeeper Almuth Schult, left, and Dzsenifer Marozsan pose for the media with their trophy after winning the women's soccer Algarve Cup at the Algarve stadium, outside Faro, southern Portugal, Wednesday, March 12, 2014. Marozsan, who was the best player of the tournament, scored once in Germany's 3-0 victory.

Associated Press

FARO, Portugal (AP) — A flurry of goals at the start

of the second half helped Germany to a 3-0 victory

Germany beats Japan 3-0 to win Algarve Cup

over world champion Japan in the final of the Algarve Cup on Wednesday. Substitute Nadine Kessler's first touch was a goal from the edge of the area in the 46th minute, and Anja Mittag doubled the advantage for the European champions four minutes later by backheeling teammate Fatmire Alushi's pass into goal.

Dzsenifer Marozsan completed the rout at the Algarve Stadium against a dazed Japan in the 61st minute with a shot from 20 meters out as the German women secured their third title in the competition. Iceland scored two first-half

goals and hung on to beat Sweden 2-1 in the third-place game at the annual competition held in the south of Portugal.

Sara Bjork Gunnarsdottir and Harp Thorsteinsdottir scored within a two-minute span to put Iceland in control half an hour into the match at Albufeira, before substitute Antonia Goransson gave Sweden some consolation in stoppage time.

"We played smart and contained them well," Gunnarsdottir said. "This was an extremely comfortable victory."

In other matches to close out the weeklong tourna-

ment, China beat Denmark 5-4 on penalties after their match ended in a 1-1 draw, the United States earned its first victory of the tournament with a 3-0 win against North Korea and Austria beat Portugal 2-1. □



Wizards' John Wall fined \$15,000 by NBA

NEW YORK (AP) — Washington Wizards guard John Wall was fined \$15,000 by the NBA on Thursday for inappropriate comments toward game officials. Wall made the remarks on the court after the Wizards' 98-85 home loss to the Charlotte Bobcats on

Wednesday. Wall had plenty to say about the officiating. He was particularly upset that he was called for fouling Kemba Walker during Walker's 3-point attempt in the fourth quarter. "I ain't touch him. All he did is scream," Wall said.

"Ref gave him a call all night because he was screaming. ... I think they made some unfortunate calls plenty of times." Wall added: "Plenty of times I drove to the basket. I think I should have been to the line plenty more." □

NBA Capsules

Continued from Page 18

Los Angeles has the third-longest winning streak in club history and the team's best record after 66 games (46-20).

Klay Thompson scored 26 points and David Lee had 20 for the Warriors, whose five-game winning streak ended with their fourth straight loss to the Clippers at Staples Center. Stephen Curry had just 13 points and 11 assists before sitting out the final minutes.

KINGS 115, 76ERS 98

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Rudy Gay scored 27 points and Isaiah Thomas added 20 as Sacramento extended Philadelphia's losing streak to 18 games.

DeMarcus Cousins had 19 points and 12 rebounds, and Ben McLemore scored 15 points for the Kings, who snapped a three-game skid. Jason Thompson added 14.

The Kings are in the midst of a seven-game, 12-day road trip, their longest of the season. They are 2-3 on the trip. Henry Sims posted career-highs of 20 points and 10 rebounds, James Anderson added 17 points and Thaddeus Young had 16 for Philadelphia, which fell to 15-49 in dropping its 14th in a row at home, an ongoing franchise record. Michael Carter-Williams had 13 points, seven rebounds and two assists two nights after earning his second career triple-double.

SPURS 103, TRAIL BLAZERS 90

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Patty Mills scored 15 points, and Tim Duncan had 10 points and 11 rebounds in limited minutes as San Antonio

rolled to its eighth straight win.

Damian Lillard had 23 points for Portland, which lost LaMarcus Aldridge to a bruised back early in the second half.

Danny Green added 14 points for San Antonio, Manu Ginobili scored 13, Kawhi Leonard had 12, and Tiago Splitter had 12 points and 10 rebounds. San Antonio's bench outscored Portland's 46-23, enabling coach Gregg Popovich to limit Duncan, Parker, Ginobili, Splitter and Green to less than 30 minutes.

Portland opened the third on an 8-0 run after trailing by as many as 17 in the first half, but lost Aldridge 43 seconds into the quarter.

KNICKS 116, CELTICS 92

BOSTON (AP) — Carmelo Anthony scored 19 of his 34 points in the first half as New York opened a 24-point lead and coasted past Boston for its fifth straight win.

Tim Hardaway Jr. added 22 points, J.R. Smith 13 and Cole Aldrich had 12 with 10 rebounds in his first career start for the Knicks, who are making a charge for the Eastern Conference's eighth and final playoff spot.

The victory moved the Knicks into ninth place, a half-game ahead of Detroit, which lost in Toronto on Wednesday. They are three games behind eighth-place Atlanta.

Jeff Green led Boston with 27 points. Kris Humphries and Jerryd Bayless each had 15 for the Celtics, who have lost nine of 12.

CAVALIERS 110, SUNS 101

PHOENIX (AP) — Kyrie Ir-



ving scored 12 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter as Cleveland spoiled Eric Bledsoe's return for Phoenix.

Spencer Hawes added 19, 17 in the first quarter, and Luol Deng scored 18 as the Cavs snapped a four-game losing streak.

Bledsoe, who had knee surgery and missed 33 games, had 15 points on 5-for-16 shooting and a team-high nine assists.

Goran Dragic scored 20 points, Markieff Morris 18 and Channing Frye 17 in the Suns' third straight loss. Irving also had nine rebounds and six assists for the Cavs, who never trailed, building a 14-point first-quarter lead. The Suns twice cut it to two in the third quarter.

RAPTORS 101, PISTONS 87

TORONTO (AP) — DeMar DeRozan scored 25 points and Amir Johnson had 20 against his former team as Toronto handed Detroit its 10th straight road defeat.

Kyle Lowry added 19 points and Jonas Valanciunas had 13 rebounds for the Atlantic Division-leading Raptors, who won for the fourth time in five meetings with Detroit. □



Charlotte Bobcats forward Michael Kidd-Gilchrist (14) defends Washington Wizards guard John Wall during the second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, March 12, 2014, in Washington. The Bobcats defeated the Wizards 98-85.

Associated Press



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Varlamov helps Avs to 3-2 win over Blackhawks

The Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Semyon Varlamov stopped 37 shots for his 100th NHL win and Brad Malone scored his first goal of the season, helping the Colorado Avalanche hold off the Chicago Blackhawks 3-2 on Wednesday. Matt Duchene and Ryan O'Reilly added goals as the Avalanche took four of five from the Blackhawks in the season series. They also moved a point ahead of the defending Stanley Cup champions for second place in the Central Division.

Patrick Kane and Brandon Saad scored for Chicago. Antti Raanta made 26 saves filling in for Corey Crawford. It was the first time Raanta has been in net since Jan. 28.

With a goal and an assist, Duchene extended his points streak to a career-best nine games.

Varlamov became the fourth Russian-born goaltender to record 100 wins, joining Evgeni Nabokov (347), Nikolai Khabibulin (333) and Ilya Bryzgalov (213). This also was Varlamov's 33rd win, second-most in the league behind Pittsburgh's Marc-Andre Fleury (34).

BRUINS 4, CANADIENS 1
MONTRÉAL (AP) — Carl Soderberg, Patrice Bergeron



Winnipeg Jets' Mark Stuart (5) and Vancouver Canucks' Alexander Edler (23) crash into Canucks goaltender Eddie Lack during the first period of an NHL hockey game Wednesday, March 12, 2014, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Associated Press

and Milan Lucic scored in the second period as Boston beat Montreal for its sixth straight victory. Tuukka Rask made 35 saves, and Zdeno Chara also scored for Boston. The Bruins improved to 43-17-5 and pulled within a point of idle Pittsburgh for the Eastern Conference lead. They are 9-1-2 in their last

12 games. David Desharnais scored for Montreal. The Canadiens have lost three in a row and are 3-4-1 without injured No. 1 goalie Carey Price since the Olympic break.

FLAMES 7, DUCKS 2
CALGARY, Alberta (AP) — Mikael Backlund scored twice and added an assist

to help Calgary rout Anaheim.

Backlund set up Mike Cammalleri in the slot for a power-play goal at 11:28 of the first that chased Ducks starter Jonas Hiller, then beat Frederik Andersen two minutes later to make it 4-0.

Backlund added his second of the night 1:31 into

the second period, this time shorthanded. Firing a wrist shot past Andersen as he broke in alone off the wing, it was the Flames' second short-handed goal of the night and NHL-leading 11th of the season. Backlund has four of them, tying him for top spot with Boston's Brad Marchand and Tampa Bay's Tyler Johnson.

Mark Giordano, TJ Galiardi, Ladislav Smid and Corban Knight with his first NHL goal also scored for Calgary. Andrew Cogliano and Nick Bonino scored for Anaheim. The Pacific Division-leading Ducks are 0-2-0 in their last four games.

CANUCKS 3, JETS 2, SO
WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Chris Higgins had the only goal in the shootout as Vancouver beat Winnipeg, rebounding from a third-period collapse in its last game.

The Canucks, 2-4-1 in their last seven games, allowed seven goals in the third period in a 7-4 home loss to the New York Islanders on Monday night.

Alexandre Burrows, with the first and second goals of his injury-marred season, tied it 2 at 11:17 of the third period. Andrew Ladd and Michael Frolik scored for the Winnipeg. The Jets have lost five straight. □

Pelucchi wins 2nd stage of Tirreno-Adriatico

CASCINA, Italy (AP) — Matteo Pelucchi timed his sprint perfectly to win the second stage of the weeklong Tirreno-Adriatico cycling race on Thursday, and Mark Cavendish retained the overall lead. Pelucchi edged Arnaud Demare and Andre Greipel after making his move 100 meters from the end of the 166-kilometer (103-mile) leg from San Vincenzo to Cascina for the biggest win of his career. Cavendish finished a disappointing 17th but remains in the overall lead after he and his Omega Pharma-Quick Step

team won a time trial to open the race on Wednesday. "It's an incredible day," Pelucchi said. "It's still hard to believe. I believe it's a result that comes from the whole team, who all wanted to do something important. It's thanks to them that I managed to win today. "As we neared the finish line I said to myself I'll try. I feel good, so I'll try. And it went well." Five riders broke clear early on, and Daniel Teklehaymanot, Marco Canola, Alex Dowsett, David De La Cruz and Davide Malacarne swiftly built a lead of five minutes.

The peloton began to reel in the escape bunch as they approached Cascina for the first of two laps of the 20-kilometer finishing circuit, although the quintet still had a lead of over three minutes.

De La Cruz was the first to be caught as Dowsett went clear at the front of the break. The Briton built up a lead of more than half a minute on his fellow escapees heading into the final circuit, with the peloton two minutes further back. A crash 13 kilometers (8 miles) from the finish brought down several rid-



Italy's Matteo Pelucchi celebrates after crossing the finish line to win the second stage of the Tirreno Adriatico cycling race from San Vincenzo to Cascina, Italy, Thursday, March 13, 2014.

Associated Press

ers, while another one with 2.5K (1.5 miles) remaining took out Marcel Kittel, who threw his bike down in frustration.

Dowsett was caught with just under 7K (4 miles) remaining as his long solo ride was brought to an end. □

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Zuckerberg voices frustration with Obama over NSA

BARBARA ORTUTAY

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg says he has called President Barack Obama to express his frustration over what he says is long-lasting damage caused by the U.S. government's surveillance programs.

Posting on his Facebook page Thursday, Zuckerberg wrote that he's been "confused and frustrated by the repeated reports of the behavior of the U.S. government. When our engineers work tirelessly to improve security, we imagine we're protecting you against criminals, not our own government."

Though Zuckerberg does not name the National Security Agency, the post comes a day after the

news site Intercept reported that the agency has impersonated a Facebook server to infect surveillance targets' computers and get files from a hard drive. The report is based on documents leaked by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden. The NSA called the report "inaccurate."

"NSA uses its technical capabilities only to support lawful and appropriate foreign intelligence operations, all of which must be carried out in strict accordance with its authorities," the agency said in a statement. White House spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden confirmed that the president spoke with Zuckerberg Wednesday night regarding "recent reports in the press about alleged activities by the U.S. intel-



In this Sept. 25, 2010 file photo, Mark Zuckerberg, right, founder and CEO of Facebook talks about his donation of \$100 million to help Newark public schools during a news conference in Newark, N.J.

Associated Press

ligence community." She gave no further comment. Technology companies in-

cluding Facebook, Google Inc., Microsoft Corp., have been increasingly vocal about frustrations over the U.S. government's spying programs. Last month, top executives from the companies, along with others from Yahoo, Twitter, AOL and LinkedIn, called for changes that would include a government agreement not to collect bulk data from Internet communications.

The ongoing strife over surveillance could threaten what's been a cordial relationship between Silicon Valley and the president. The region has voted overwhelmingly for Obama in both of the past two presidential elections. Nearly 70 percent of Santa Clara County, which is home to Facebook, Google, Yahoo and a slew of other tech giants, sided with the president in the 2012 elections. In Thursday's post, Zuckerberg called on the government to be more transparent, but added that, unfortunately, "it seems like it will take a very long time for true full reform."

In January, Obama ordered a series of changes to mass surveillance programs that included ending the government's control of phone data from hundreds of millions of Americans and ordered intelligence agencies to get a court's permission before accessing such records. Tech companies took the president's speech as a step in the right direction, but said that more is needed to protect people's privacy — along with the economic interests of U.S. companies that generate most of their revenue overseas. U.S. Internet companies are worried that people, especially those living overseas, won't trust them with personal information if they believe such data is being collected by the U.S. government.

"The U.S. government should be the champion for the Internet, not a threat. They need to be much more transparent about what they're doing, or otherwise people will believe the worst," Zuckerberg wrote. □

Yahoo's search engine leans on Yelp for help

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Yahoo is cribbing from Yelp's online reviews of local merchants to soup up its search engine.

Ratings and excerpts from Yelp's merchant reviews began to appear in Yahoo's search results on Wednesday.

Financial terms of the partnership weren't disclosed. News of the deal first leaked out last month, so it didn't come as a surprise. Yahoo Inc. is hoping the snippets from Yelp Inc.'s popular service will spur more people to rely on its search engine when they're looking for information about a specific city. Yelp could generate more revenue and polish its brand by having its content featured in Yahoo's search results.

Boosting search traffic is a

high priority for Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer because the queries spawn insights into users' interests. That knowledge can then be used to sell advertising. Yahoo ranks a distant third in Internet search behind Google Inc. and Microsoft Corp.'s Bing.

Neither of those search engines will be able to highlight Yelp's material in the same way that Yahoo now can. Google had been showing Yelp snippets in its search engine a few years ago, prompting Yelp to complain that it was being cheated out of revenue and traffic. After U.S. antitrust regulators opened an investigation in 2011 into whether Google was trying to stifle competition, the company stopped using Yelp's reviews in its local search results.

Yahoo's search market share has been steadily slipping since the Sunnyvale, California, company began relying on Microsoft's technology to produce most of its results in 2010. That alliance still gives Yahoo the flexibility to add other features to its search results.

Microsoft also helps sell some of the advertising displayed alongside Yahoo's search results. Ad revenue initially slumped after Microsoft and Yahoo joined forces, but the numbers have been looking better during the past two years. After subtracting ad commissions, Yahoo's search revenue last year rose 6 percent to \$1.7 billion. Yelp's revenue last year totaled \$233 million, a 69 percent increase from the previous year. □

Stocks slump; Dow posts 4th loss in a row

ALEX VEIGA
AP Business Writer

The Dow Jones industrial average fell more than 200 points Thursday, its biggest decline in six weeks.

The pullback came as investors reacted to discour-

what's going on in Ukraine, to get people a little bit nervous and sell," said Ian Winer, director of trading at Wedbush Securities. The Dow Jones industrial average slid 231.19 points, or 1.4 percent, to 16,108.89.

sought safety. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note declined to 2.65 percent from 2.73 percent a day earlier as bond prices rose. Nine of the 10 sectors in the S&P 500 index fell. Information technology lost the

what they see," said Lawrence Creatura, a portfolio manager at Federated Investors. "Even small hiccups there can have large implications for investors."

The market jitters intensified later in the morning, when President Barack Obama issued remarks after meeting with Ukraine's new prime minister at the White House.

Obama said that if Russia continues an aggressive path in Ukraine, the United States and other countries will be "forced to apply costs" to Moscow.

Citizens in the Ukrainian region of Crimea are set to vote on joining Russia on Sunday. The U.S. and European Union say the referendum violates Ukraine's constitution and international law. Russia has said it will respect the results.

Secretary of State John Kerry told a Senate committee on Thursday that Moscow should expect the U.S. and Europe to take measures against it should Russia act on a vote by Crimea to join Russia.

"The hardening of the rhetoric in these communications is a change," Creatura said.

Winer said that investors weren't panicked.

"The selling is pretty complacent," he said. "This is more about how people are positioned in the market." Several companies that provide oil and gas offshore drilling services fell Thursday.

Diamond Offshore Drilling fell \$1.99, or 4.3 percent, to \$44.39, while Noble Corp. shed \$1.38, or 4.5 percent, to \$28.98. □



Vietnam's Finance Minister Dinh Tien Dung, second from right, visits the trading post of specialist Jason Hardzewicz on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Thursday, March 13, 2014.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

aging economic reports from China and intensifying tensions in Ukraine. It was the worst day for the market in six weeks and the fourth loss in a row for the Dow. The plunge was a sharp contrast to the relatively quiet trading earlier in the week following a record-setting run last week. Stocks started the day trading slightly higher following news of a pickup in U.S. retail sales last month, but the gains didn't last.

"The data out of China has been weak. The retail sector in America seems to be a total disaster. It's enough, combined with

The S&P 500 index fell 21.86 points, or 1.2 percent, to close at 1,846.34. The Nasdaq composite dropped 62.91 points, or 1.5 percent, to 4,260.42.

The last time the market had a bigger decline was Feb. 3, when the Dow sank 326 points, or 2.1 percent. Thursday's slide erased the S&P 500 index's gains for the year and extended the Dow's year-to-date loss to 2.8 percent. The Nasdaq is still up 2 percent so far this year.

Stocks that fell outnumbered those that rose more than two to one.

Bond prices rose as traders

most. Utilities bucked the trend, rising 0.9 percent. Investors tend to buy those stocks when they want to reduce risk and hold stable companies that pay steady dividends.

Concerns over China worsened Thursday after government figures there showed industrial production rose in the first two months of the year at a rate that was lower than analysts were expecting. Retail sales growth also fell short of estimates.

"At this stage, investors are linking these negative data points coming out of China and they don't like

Applications for US jobless aid dip to 3-month low

C. S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of people seeking U.S. unemployment benefits dropped 9,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 315,000, its lowest level in three months. It was the second straight decline, and it added to evidence that the job market is picking up after a winter slump.

The Labor Department said Thursday that the four-week average of applications, a less volatile figure, fell 6,250 to 330,500, the lowest point since early December.

Applications are a rough proxy for layoffs. The declines indicate that most companies are confident enough about consumer demand to avoid layoffs. Employers are also hiring more after harsh winter weather depressed job gains in January and December, the government said last week. The economy gained 175,000 jobs last month, up from just 129,000 in January and only 84,000 in December.

"We are encouraged by this report," Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said in a note to clients, "because it supports the idea that the recent gyrations in monthly labor market indicators...have been driven by the weather."

About 3.45 million people received unemployment benefits as of Feb. 22, the latest period for which figures are available. That's 13,000 more than in the previous week.

In a separate report Thursday, the Commerce Department said sales at retail stores and restaurants rose 0.3 percent last month. The rebound shows that consumers are spending a bit more after sales fell a sharp 0.6 percent in January.

The unemployment applications and retail sales suggest that the economy is recovering after severe weather caused auto sales to dip, factory orders to fall and sales of existing homes to plummet. □

GE plans IPO for finance spinoff later this year

FAIRFIELD, Connecticut (AP) — General Electric is moving ahead with plans to spin off its North American consumer lending unit, and it aims to complete an initial public offering for the business later this year.

The company, to be called Synchrony Financial, estimates proceeds of up to \$100 million from the offering, a figure it devised primarily to calculate a

filings fee, according to a document filed Thursday with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The document did not indicate how many shares will be offered or at what price. General Electric Co., based in Fairfield, Connecticut, announced last fall that it would spin off the business, which is part of GE Capital and provides store credit cards through retail-

ers like Wal-Mart and the home-improvement chain Lowe's. GE has been shifting its focus more toward industrial equipment and appliances. CEO Jeff Immelt said last spring that GE wants to reduce the finance arm's assets from about \$400 billion in 2013's first quarter to between \$300 billion and \$350 billion by the end of next year. The company's products in-

clude jet engines, medical diagnostic equipment, oil and gas drilling equipment and washing machines. The planned Synchrony Financial spinoff also works with retailers like Amazon and Ethan Allen. It had 62 million active accounts last year, when it financed \$93.9 billion in sales.

According to the SEC filing, the unit recorded \$2 billion in earnings last year. □

US budget deficit hits \$193.5B for February

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government is running a deficit that is 23.6 percent lower than in the same period a year ago through the first five months of this budget year, another sign of improvement in the nation's finances.

In its monthly budget report, the Treasury Department said Thursday that the deficit for February totaled \$193.5 billion, the largest monthly imbalance in a year. The government traditionally runs large deficits in February, a month when it is sending out tax refund payments.

For the period from October through February, the deficit totals \$377.4 billion, down from \$493.95 billion a year ago.

Last week, President Barack Obama sent Congress a new budget which projects the deficit will fall to \$649 billion this year, down from a \$680 billion deficit last year.

The Congressional Budget Office is forecasting an even lower deficit this year of \$514 billion. Both the administration and the CBO expect the deficit to improve as an improving economy boosts tax revenues and lowers spending on such government support programs as unemployment benefits.

The deficit is also being trimmed by tighter spending restraints imposed in response to four straight years in which the deficit soared above \$1 trillion annually. Through the first five months of this budget year, which begins on Oct. 1, government receipts totaled \$1.1 trillion, 9.3 percent higher than the same period a year ago. Outlays totaled \$1.48 trillion, 1.5 percent lower than a year ago.

The CBO is forecasting that the deficit will fall further to \$478 billion in 2015. But it sees deficits rising after that, climbing above \$1 trillion again in 2022 and 2023. The deficits will be pushed higher by rising spending on the government's big benefit programs including Social Security and Medicare, as baby boomers — Americans born between 1946 and 1964 — retire.

Republicans attacked Obama for failing in his new budget to put forth significant changes to deal with the soaring entitlement costs. Obama did offer a major proposal last year, reducing the cost-of-living increases paid to Social Security recipients, but he made that offer on condition that Republicans agree to increase taxes on the wealthy.

In his new budget, Obama did not include a proposal to trim cost-of-living increases, saying he would not offer that again until Republicans showed flexibility on higher taxes for the wealthy.

Obama's budget, which proposes spending \$3.9 trillion in the budget year that begins Oct. 1, included many spending and tax proposals he has put forward before. It was met with heavy Republican criticism for spending too much and failing to do enough to tackle the country's long-term deficit problems.

However, the expectation is that the budget wars of the past three years may subside this year following an agreement reached last December on the broad outlines for spending for the next two years.

That will allow Washington to avoid the contentious showdowns that culminated in a 16-day partial government shutdown last October.

The cease-fire in the budget wars also includes legislation Obama signed into law last month that will suspend the government's borrowing limit through March 15 of next year, putting off another battle over raising the debt limit until a new Congress is elected next November and takes office next January. □

US business inventories rise; sales plunge

JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. businesses continued to restock their shelves and warehouses in January, but sales plunged during the snowstorm-plagued month.

Inventories rose 0.4 percent after a 0.5 percent increase in December, the Commerce Department said Thursday.

But sales dropped 0.9 percent in January after a 0.1 percent decrease the previous month, putting sales back near September 2013 levels.

The report suggests that winter weather kept shoppers at home. But businesses anticipate a rebound

because they expanded their inventories to meet expected demand in the months ahead.

Still, there is a possible danger to economic growth: When companies build their stockpiles as their sales fall, they may end up stuck with more goods than they need.

That potentially forces them to slash prices and sell at discounts in order to clear the extra inventory.

However, the February retail sales figures released separately on Thursday indicate that sales growth has picked up. Retail spending rose 0.3 percent in February.

Retail sales had fallen 0.6 percent in January and 0.3

percent in December. The increase suggests that consumer spending has started to recover after being tempered by snowstorms and freezing temperatures that blanketed much of the country.

Yet overall economic growth could be slower due to the recent decline in sales and inventory expansion that has slowed from its pace in the middle of 2013.

Slower restocking will likely lower growth to about a 2 percent annual pace in the first quarter of 2014, down from 4.1 percent in last year's July-September quarter and 2.4 percent in the October-December quarter. □

US retail sales rebound 0.3% in February



Shoppers check out the sale at an ALDO store in the Mall at Robinson, in Robinson Township, Pa. The Commerce Department reported on retail sales for February Thursday March 13, 2014.

(AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar)

JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. retail sales bounced back in February after suffering a steep decline during a bitterly cold January.

Shoppers spent more on

autos, clothing and furniture.

The Commerce Department said Thursday that seasonally-adjusted retail sales rose 0.3 percent in February. Spending had fallen 0.6 percent in Janu-

ary, revised down from the 0.4 percent decline initially reported. Retail spending also fell 0.3 percent in December.

The increase suggests that consumer spending has started to recover after being tempered by snowstorms and freezing temperatures that blanketed much of the country.

Auto sales rose 0.3 percent. Excluding volatile spending on autos, gas and building supplies, retail sales increased 0.3 percent from December.

Last month's rebound almost brought retail spending back to its December levels. Purchases at restaurants, online retailers and department stores also improved, although the economy has yet to fully shake off winter's impact. Over the past 12 months, retail sales have risen a modest 1.5 percent.

The retail report offers a first look at February's consumer spending, which accounts for about 70 percent of all economic activity. Many economists came into 2014 projecting that stronger consumer spending would cause growth to accelerate, only to find those estimates frustrated by the freezing weather across much of the country. □

Mutts



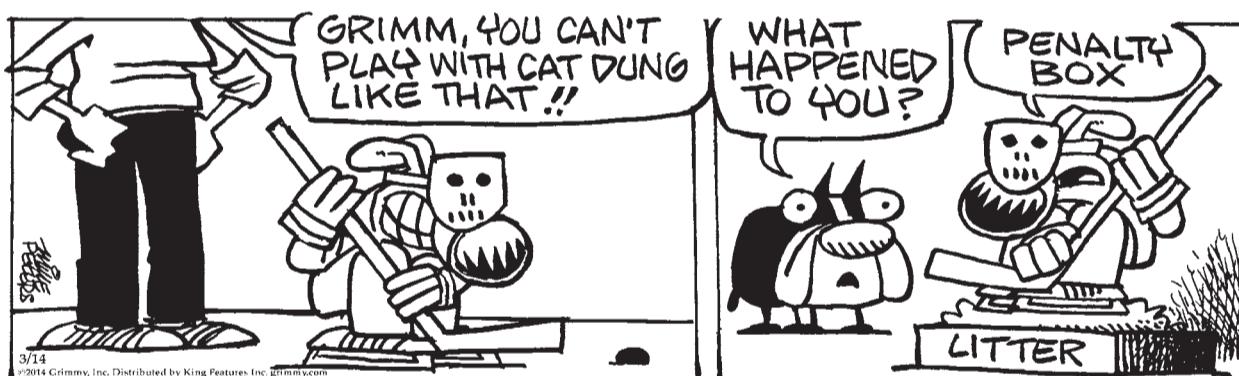
6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

4		9		8				
9	8			6	5			
6	8	5				6		
1			7	3	9			
7	6			2	9			
		3						
8		4		1				

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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3/14

9	3	5	2	4	8	1	7	6
2	4	6	9	7	1	5	3	8
7	1	8	5	3	6	4	2	9
3	2	9	8	5	4	6	1	7
8	5	7	1	6	2	3	9	4
1	6	4	3	9	7	8	5	2
5	7	1	4	8	9	2	6	3
6	8	3	7	2	5	9	4	1
4	9	2	6	1	3	7	8	5

Yesterday's puzzle answer

3/14

ACROSS

1 Rapids, Iowa
6 Finds a total
10 Hawaiian island
14 No longer sleeping
15 Feast at which poi is served
16 Apartment
17 Send in payment
18 Blyth & Jillian
19 Fabric for lining a jewelry box
20 First showing of a movie
22 Veer off course
24 Teacup's edge
25 Go in again
26 Reverberated
29 -up; confused
30 Beverage with foam on top
31 Money deducted
33 Passed out cards
37 Waterproof ball field covering
39 Acting parts
41 June 6, 1944
42 Perspiration
44 Sits for a spell
46 ___ code; part of an address
47 Lassos, e.g.
49 Withdraw
51 Quito's nation
54 Valley
55 Actor Ted ___
56 Mighty
60 Bump ___; meet
61 "The Farmer in the ___"
63 Stop
64 Spiral
65 Daredevil ___ Knievel
66 ___ aback; surprised
67 Golf pegs
68 Communists
69 Luge vehicles

7 Sand mound
8 Rather or Fouts
9 English county
10 Insulted
11 Vigilant
12 Bisect
13 Sheer; total
21 Large sea duck
23 Unwanted plant
25 Ceremonies
26 Has lunch
27 Talon
28 Roll call response
29 ___ per hour; MPH
32 Any hole-making device
34 Shaping tool
35 ___ up; ill in bed

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
20				21			22	23				
					24			25				
26	27	28				29						
30			31	32			33		34	35	36	
37		38	39			40		41				
42			43	44			45	46				
51	52	53					54					
55					56				57	58	59	
60			61	62			63					
64		65				66						
67		68			69							

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

3/14/14

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

F	B	I	O	T	H	E	R	E	E	D	G	Y
E	A	T	S		B	R	A	K	E	N	I	L
D	I	C	E		T	I	R	E	S	O	P	E
L	H	A	S	A	P	S	O	U	E	S	U	E
R	A	I	L									
E	N	S	I	G								
M	A	I	N	E								
B	I	N	G	H								
H	O	W	I	E								
E	V	E	A	I	D	E	P	I	C	E		
R	E	W	A	R	D	E	P	A	R	T	E	
B	E	E	A	S	P	A	T	A	M	E		
P	A	P	A									
A	L	I	T									
I	S	E										
L	O	S										

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3/14/14

36 Sort; variety
38 Umbrellas
40 "Turkey in the ___"
43 Well-___; rich
45 Chooses
48 Think about
50 Breakfast food
52 Paddled boat
53 Loosen
54 Gifts for girls
56 ___ with; implored
57 Phony
58 Secondhand
59 Part of the eye
62 Arden or Plumb

Classifieds

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201561



Up, up and away for a live TV special from space

FRAZIER MOORE

AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—National Geographic Channel is targeting a subject that's literally over our heads, bringing it down to Earth in an ambitious two-hour special.

Airing Friday at 8 p.m. Eastern/5 p.m. Pacific, "Live From Space" will originate from the International Space Station with American astronaut Rick Mastracchio and Koichi Wakata, who's Japanese, as on-board correspondents. (It will air on National Geographic Channel in 170 countries in all, on Channel 4 in the United Kingdom and on the Spanish-language Nat Geo MUNDO network.)

Veteran reporter Soledad O'Brien will anchor from NASA Mission Control in Houston.

O'Brien said she's excited about the special, and particularly happy to be hosting "Live From Space" from a comfortable distance.

"The moment I understood that I would be firmly on the ground and THEY would be firmly in space, and we would have an opportunity to do something that hasn't been done before, I was in," said O'Brien as she



This Nov. 7, 2013 file photo shows Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata, a crew member of the International Space Station, waving prior to the launch of Soyuz-FG rocket at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan. Wakata, along with U.S. astronaut Rick Mastracchio, will serve as on-board correspondents for a National Geographic special called "Live From Space," airing Friday, March 14 at 8 p.m. EST on the National Geographic Channel.

Associated Press

prepared to leave for Houston where, besides serving as a producer, she will preside alongside astronaut Mike Massimino, who has

logged quite a few miles in space.

One of the many challenges of mounting a TV special like this: Its remote "studio"

is 250 miles above the Earth's surface and hurtling through space at 17,500 miles per hour. During the span of the special, the space station (and viewers) will circle the planet and begin a second orbit, with dazzling dawn-to-dusk-to-nightscape views promised.

But staying connected won't be a snap. To fill any gaps when TV contact with the space station might be interrupted, and to supplement the special with background perspective, the on-site astronauts have been taping features for inclusion in the program.

"They are phenomenal 'field reporters,'" said O'Brien, "especially when you think of everything they have to do when they're NOT shooting video."

One of the more dramatic taped segments: Last summer's near-drowning of Italian astronaut Luca Parmitano as his helmet filled with a half-gallon of water during a spacewalk to do

repair work on the craft. He barely made it back inside the station alive. Despite Parmitano's calm demeanor, the sequence is riveting, even alarming, as a reminder of the risks of space travel — and may recall for some viewers the recent outer-space thriller "Gravity."

"Sometimes the reality is more compelling than a movie version has to be," said O'Brien.

But most of "Live From Space" is meant to be live, including a guided tour of the station, which spans the area of a football field and weighs nearly 1 million pounds. Besides Mastracchio and Wakata, the station's only other resident currently is Russia's Mikhail Tyurin. But the complex has more livable room than a conventional six-bedroom house, with two bathrooms, a gym and a 360-degree bay window that viewers will be able to peer out of.

The astronauts will conduct never-before-broadcast experiments that demonstrate the scientific purpose of the station.

And they'll address some up-close-and-personal issues, such as what it's like living in microgravity for months, how they're able to sleep upside down, how they maintain personal hygiene and how they use the toilet.

Viewers are welcome to get on board — virtually — through Instagram by posting photos, videos and questions.

In many ways, "Live From Space" will be a typical project for O'Brien (who has tackled lots of live telecasts for NBC News, CNN and elsewhere). On Thursday, she prepared for a routine run-through of the broadcast.

But there will be differences aplenty that set this show apart.

"What is the best way to navigate an interview with two guys who are 250 miles up and speeding through space?" O'Brien wondered, voicing just one of them. □

Burials in Greece linked to Macedonia kings

THESSALONIKI, Greece (AP)

— A Greek archaeologist says she has discovered 20 new burials near Macedonia's ancient capital in northern Greece, and some could tentatively be

associated with the early Macedonian kings. Excavator Angeliki Kottaridi says two of the poorly preserved graves excavated in a cemetery between 2012-2013 "might perhaps

be linked" with Alexander I and his son, Perdiccas II. Both reigned in the 5th century B.C., a century before the most famous ancient Macedonian king, Alexander III the Great.

In a statement Thursday, Kottaridi said the graves at Vergina — believed to be ancient Aegae — were looted and largely dismantled in antiquity. Surviving finds included vases and a sword. A rich burial excavated decades ago at Vergina has been linked with Phillip II, father of Alexander the Great, although many experts disagree. □

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This July 31, 2013 file photo shows actress Cynthia Nixon at the Do Something Awards in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Nixon to get a second bite of 'The Real Thing'

MARK KENNEDY
AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tony Award winner Cynthia Nixon is ready for another shot of "The Real Thing." Roundabout Theatre Company said Thursday that Nixon, who starred in the Tom Stoppard play when it first came to Broadway in 1984, will come back this fall in a revival with Ewan McGregor and Maggie Gyllenhaal. The play about relationships and fidelity centers on a married playwright who falls for an actress. In 1984, Nixon played the teenager Debbie. This time, 30 years later, the "Sex and the City" star will tackle Charlotte, her mother. Previews begin Oct. 2 and it will open officially on Oct. 30 at the American Airlines Theatre under the direction of Sam Gold.

Nixon was in "Wit" on Broadway and won a Tony for "Rabbit Hole." □

Hip-hop pioneers hoping to create NYC museum

NEW YORK (AP) — The pioneers of hip-hop are hoping to create a museum in New York City dedicated to the genre.

Organizers say the museum in the Bronx would be called the Universal Hip Hop Museum.

Afrika Bambaataa says the museum would look at the

historical and cultural roots of hip-hop and the contributions made by break dancers and disc jockeys. Bambaataa is frequently called the father of hip-hop. He would serve as the museum's chairman. The museum hopes to open in 2017 inside the Kingsbridge Armory, which

'Noah' will not debut in much of Muslim world

AYA BATRAWY

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Officials across much of the Muslim world said Thursday that the upcoming big-budget Hollywood film "Noah" featuring Russell Crowe as the ark-building prophet will not be shown in local theaters because it could offend viewers.

The decision comes after the film sparked controversy among conservative Christians in the U.S., which prompted Paramount Pictures to add a disclaimer to its marketing material saying that "artistic license has been taken" in telling the story.

Director of media content at the National Media Center in the United Arab Emirates, Juma Al-Leem, told The Associated Press that the movie will not be allowed in local cinemas because it contradicts a generally held taboo in Islam of depicting a prophet.

"There are scenes that contradict Islam and the Bible, so we decided not to show it," he said, adding that UAE censors watched the film before deciding to ban it. "It is important to respect these religions and not show the film."

Paramount Pictures told the AP that along with the UAE, censors in Qatar and Bahrain also have confirmed they will not release the film because "it con-



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows Jennifer Connelly, left, and Russell Crowe in a scene from "Noah."

Associated Press

tradicts the teachings of Islam." One of Islam's most revered religious institutions, Al-Azhar in Egypt, issued an edict saying it objects to the film because it violates Islamic law by depicting a prophet and that this could "provoke the feelings of believers."

Among Muslims, depictions of any prophets are shunned to avoid worship of a person rather than God. Many Muslim majority countries also criminalize blasphemy.

The Quran mentions only 25 prophets by name, including Noah. Muslims believe that Noah, who is referred to in Arabic as Nuh, built his ark after God charged him to do it as people in his community refused to worship God alone. While there are differences between the biblical and Quranic story of Noah, both mention a terrible

flood and Noah's vessel saving a pair of each kind of animal. Officials in other Muslim majority countries said government censors probably will not approve the movie.

Mohammad Zareef, an official with Pakistan's Central Board of Film Censors, said the government body generally does not approve films that touch on religion.

Tunisian Culture Ministry spokesman Faisal Rokh said the government does not authorize the screening of films that cover the lives of prophets due to local sensitivities. As is the case in Morocco, he says there have not been any requests by local distributors to show the movie.

There are many children's films and cartoons created that tell the story of Noah in Islam without showing his face. However, there have been cases where prophets or their companions have been shown on screens in the Middle East. Despite some objections, the popular MBC Arabic satellite network broadcast a television series in 2012 on the life of Omar ibn al-Khattab, one of the Prophet Muhammad's most revered companions. Mel Gibson's "Passion of Christ," which depicts the crucifixion of Jesus, was screened across much of the region, though it was not shown in most cinemas in Israel and parts of the Gulf. □



In this Feb. 28, 2006 file photo, Afrika Bambaataa speaks at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in New York.

Associated Press

With help from thousands, 'Veronica Mars' reborn

JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Rob Thomas knew he might make movie history by using Kickstarter to crowdfund his "Veronica Mars" film. But he wasn't prepared for the posters. Of all the prizes offered to donors of "Veronica Mars" — everything from a digital copy of the script for \$10 to a walk-on cameo for \$10,000 — the most taxing was autographing the cast-signed posters promised to more than 5,000 backers. It took several hand-cramping days and constant shuttling of boxes from one signee to the next.

"We've got our own poster handler who is in charge of getting them to us and getting them signed," Thomas said in a recent interview. "It's required, like, its own department."

But, he adds, "This movie would not exist if we had not gone down this path." It's been a year since Thomas sent shockwaves through the movie industry by turning to the crowd-funding site Kickstarter to help finance a movie based on his cultishly adored but short-lived high-school detective series. On Friday, the movie hits theaters and video-on-demand. As the first high-profile celebrity project to



From left, Jason Dohring, writer/producer/director Rob Thomas, Kristen Bell, Ryan Hansen and Amanda Noret arrive at the LA Premiere of "Veronica Mars" on Wednesday, March 12, 2014, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

drum up money on Kickstarter, "Veronica Mars" is a trailblazer, albeit one with a cloudy legacy.

Thomas has already been followed by projects by Zach Braff (to fund his second directorial effort) and Spike Lee (to raise cash for his latest "joint"). The land rush into a new avenue of funding (a major struggle for most filmmakers) has raised questions about the ethics of fan-based financing. (Contributors pay for

different levels of rewards, but don't share in profits.) "Veronica Mars" may have introduced a democratic spirit to a green-lighting process usually controlled by film executives, but it has also opened a Pandora's box where, critics say, established insiders can take advantage of their loyal followings. "It's a brilliant idea that's gotten out of hand," "House of Cards" producer Dana Brunetti recently

said at a SXSW panel discussion. "It's wrong when people like Zach Braff or Spike Lee use that same service to fund their films when they already have access. I think it overshadows and takes away from the little guys who actually need the funding." Thomas says he'd rather not be considered a poster boy for Kickstarter. "Every project has its own separate concerns," he says. Instead, he believes the

choice is up to consumers. "If it bothers you that Zach Braff probably has a lot of money from 'Scrubs,'" says Thomas, "then don't give to it." Before "Veronica Mars" found 91,585 backers who pledged about \$5.7 million (far surpassing the \$2 million Thomas sought), it was essentially doomed. The Warner Bros. Television-produced series was canceled in 2007 after three seasons on UPN and CW. Yet fans of the show — which Thomas pitched as "teen noir" — loved its sharp banter and the dark atmosphere of a corrupt California town, the fictional Neptune. As the witty, street-smart title character, Kristen Bell (whose fame has since grown and who now stars on Showtime's "House of Lies") followed the strong female protagonists of shows like "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Alias."

Thomas, whose other shows include the similarly cult favorite "Party Down," was only able to lobby Warner Bros. to make a "Veronica Mars" movie if he proved the fervent fan base. Though a grassroots triumph, "Veronica Mars" has behind it one of the largest, most powerful movie studios on the planet, which easily could have bankrolled the film if it wanted to. □

Nick launching sports awards show

DAVID BAUDER

AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Nickelodeon is looking to slime some athletes. The network said Thursday it is starting a sports awards show modeled after its popular Kids' Choice Awards honoring the highs and lows in entertainment.

"Kids' Choice Sports 2014," with former football star and daytime talk-show host Michael Strahan as executive producer and host, is planned for July 17 in Los Angeles.

Nick viewers will vote on their favorite teams, players and sports moments —



This Oct. 28, 2013 file photo shows former professional football player Michael Strahan, co-host of "Live with Kelly and Michael", attending the 23rd Annual Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame Awards in New York.

Associated Press

some serious, some not so serious. As always, some of the stars will get "slimed,"

or covered in the bright green gunk that gets a young audience laughing.

The Kids' Choice Awards, to be held March 29 with Mark Wahlberg as host, is annually one of the network's most popular programs. Last year's show was seen live by just under 6 million people, with the audience totaling 12 million during a weekend's worth of reruns.

"It galvanizes the company and galvanizes the audience," said network President Cyma Zarghami, who was to speak about the initiative to an audience of advertisers. "The combination of Nick talent and Hollywood talent means a lot of excitement."

It creates energy around our brand, and big fat ratings, too."

That history, and the knowledge that big-event programming — particularly sports — is becoming increasingly important for television networks, made Nick's decision easy, she said.

"We had a little bit of a 'duh' moment internally," Zarghami said.

A Nickelodeon poll of children aged 7 to 14 taken in December found that roughly 80 percent participated in some organized sport, with girls more active than boys. □

Lunch on the Barricades



GAIL COLLINS

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Let's consider school lunches. Always an important topic. But to be honest, it's only coming up right now thanks to Rep. Paul Ryan, who took a strong, principled stand against school lunches in a speech to the Conservative Political Action Conference. ("What they're offering people is a full stomach and an empty soul.")

Ryan's point was that mothers who pack their children's lunches are showing their love, while kids who get their food from the cafeteria lady will feel that nobody cares. Have you ever heard a more terrible thing to say? Most American mothers work, and they are already guilt-ridden over everything under the sun. They are constantly hearing stories about some other woman who has six kids and manages a major corporation yet still finds time to sew a sequin-crusted mermaid costume for the 8-year-old's Halloween parade. Most American mothers feel remarkably successful when everybody gets off to school with matching socks. Now Paul Ryan wants to tell them they've committed child abuse by failure to fill a brown bag.

Fortunately, the speech ended badly: Ryan included a story about a poor schoolboy begging for a home-packed lunch, which turned out to be rather fictional. But it was still an interesting window into the right's growing antipathy toward school meals. School lunches have always been political, in a peculiar agricultural way. The frozen food lobby takes on the fresh produce people. The tomato growers do battle with nutritionists who don't want to count pizza as a vegetable. The anti-starch advocates versus the potato growers. (In 2011, Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Mark Udall of Colorado led a successful bipartisan drive to protect the right of potatoes to roam free across the menus of American school cafeterias.)

But the basic idea of providing healthy subsidized meals for public school students used to be universally accepted. Like Social Security, or federally funded bridge reconstruction.

No more. These days, you can find vocal opposition to any federal program that gives something to poor people. Rep. Jack Kingston of Georgia, who's running for the Republican Senate

nomination, has been arguing that kids who qualify for subsidized school meals should be required to do janitorial work in order to demolish the idea "that there is such a thing as a free lunch."

Then there's that vision of the hand-packed meal as a symbol of Family. Every once in a while, a rumor crops up that an elementary school somewhere is prohibiting brown bags and forcing all its students to eat Obamafare. This does not actually seem to be happening. However it is true that the Department of Agriculture, which oversees the school lunch program, is wildly sensitive to any suggestions that it would ever get between a child and a homemade peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

"What the parent decides is sufficient," said Undersecretary Kevin Concannon.

(Concannon has a picture in his office that was taken when he toured a school in New Orleans. He's chatting over lunch with a little girl who pointed to his plate and said: "Mister, if you're not going to finish your broccoli, I'll finish it for you." He has seen the future, and it is eating green vegetables.)

Finally, there's the rancor toward the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which Congress passed in 2010 with the strong backing of Michelle Obama. Its push toward healthier school menus is a popular target with the right. In theory, this is a rejection of federal interference with local decision-making. But, mainly, I suspect, it's an attempt to remind average Americans that the first lady gets up to work out at 4:30 a.m. and probably does not approve of some of their lifestyle choices.

Plus, it's always easy to make fun of kale. Los Angeles schools, which were trailblazers, got no end of grief for their rather abrupt transition from chocolate milk and chicken nuggets to a menu that was heavy on things like vegetable curry and lentils. "School kids in Los Angeles have blown the whistle on the east wing chef-in-chief's healthy lunch diktats," announced columnist Michelle Malkin triumphantly.

David Binkle of the Los Angeles Unified School District says that after a rather rocky shakedown, things are going great and student food sales are way up.

"And we don't even have pizza on the menu," he said.

The kids are drinking more milk than ever, even without chocolate flavoring. The lentils are still there, Binkle said, but they tend to be hidden away in salads.

We'll be hearing more complaints soon; the second phase of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act kicks in this year, and it includes bans on snacks like candy bars, Doritos or sugary soft drinks, even in vending machines. Gone from the cafeteria forever. Unless your mother packs them in a brown paper bag. □



The Unhealthy Meat Market



NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF

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Where does our food come from? Often the answer is Tyson Foods, America's meat factory. Tyson, one of the nation's 100 biggest companies, slaughters 135,000 head of cattle a week, along with 391,000 hogs and an astonishing 41 million chickens. Nearly all Americans regularly eat Tyson meat - at home, at McDonald's, at a cafeteria, at a nursing home.

"Even if Tyson did not produce a given piece of meat, the consumer is really only picking between different versions of the same commoditized beef, chicken, and pork that is produced through a system Tyson pioneered," says Christopher Leonard, a longtime agribusiness journalist, in his new book about Tyson called "The Meat Racket."

Leonard's book argues that a handful of companies, led by Tyson, control our meat industry in ways that raise concerns about the impact on animals and humans alike, while tearing at the fabric of rural America. Many chicken farmers don't even own the chickens they raise or know what's in the feed. They just raise the poultry on contract for Tyson, and many struggle to make a living.

Concerned by the meat oligopoly's dominance of rural America, President Barack Obama undertook a push beginning in 2010 to strengthen antitrust oversight of the meat industry and make it easier for farmers to sue meatpackers. The aim was grand: to

create a "new rural economy" to empower individual farmers. Big Meat's lobbyists used its friends in Congress to crush the Obama administration's regulatory effort, which collapsed in "spectacular failure," Leonard writes.

Factory farming has plenty of devastating consequences, but it's only fair to acknowledge that it has benefited our pocketbooks. When President Herbert Hoover dreamed of putting "a chicken in every pot," chicken was a luxury dish more expensive than beef. In 1930, whole dressed chicken retailed for \$6.48 a pound in today's currency, according to the National Chicken Council. By last year, partly because of Tyson, chicken retailed for an average price of \$1.57 per pound - much less than beef.

Costs came down partly because scientific breeding reduced the length of time needed to raise a chicken to slaughter by more than half since 1925, even as a chicken's weight doubled. The amount of feed required to produce a pound of chicken has also dropped sharply.

And yet.

This industrial agriculture system also has imposed enormous costs of three kinds.

First, it has been a catastrophe for animals. Chickens are bred to grow huge breasts so that as adults they topple forward and can barely breathe or stand.

"These birds are essentially bred to suffer," says Laurie Beacham of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which argues that there's an inherent cruelty in raising these "exploding chickens."

Poultry Science journal has calculated that if humans grew at the same rate as modern chickens, a human by the age of 2 months would weigh 660 pounds. Second, factory farming endangers our health. Robert Martin of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health notes

that a farm with 10,000 hogs produces as much fecal waste as a small city with 40,000 people, but the hog operation won't have a waste treatment plant. Indeed, the hogs in a single county in North Carolina produce half as much waste as all the people in New York City, Martin says.

Another health concern is that antibiotics are routinely fed to animals and birds to help them grow quickly in crowded, dirty conditions. This can lead to antibiotic resistant infections, which strike 2 million Americans annually (overuse of antibiotics on human patients is also a factor, but four-fifths of antibiotics in the U.S. go to farm animals). Third, this industrial model has led to a hollowing out of rural America. The heartland is left with a few tycoons and a large number of people struggling at the margins.

Leonard writes in his book that in 68 percent of the counties where Tyson operates, per capita income has grown more slowly over the last four decades than the average in that state. We may think of rural America as a halcyon pastoral of red barns and the Waltons, but today it's also a land of unemployment, poverty, despair and methamphetamines.

It's easy to criticize the current model of industrial agriculture, far harder to outline a viable alternative. Going back to the rural structure represented by the inefficient family farm on which I grew up in Oregon isn't a solution; then we'd be back to \$6.48-a-pound chicken.

But a starting point is to recognize bluntly that our industrial food system is unhealthy. It privatizes gains but socializes the health and environmental costs. It rewards shareholders - Tyson's stock price has quadrupled since early 2009 - but can be ghastly for the animals and humans it touches. Industrial meat has an acrid aftertaste. □

To Keep Teenagers Alert, Schools Let Them Sleep In

JAN HOFFMAN

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COLUMBIA, Mo. - Jilly Dos Santos really did try to get to school on time. She set three successive alarms on her phone. Skipped breakfast. Hastily applied makeup while her fuming father drove. But last year she rarely made it into the frantic scrum at the doors of Rock Bridge High School in time by the first bell, at 7:50 a.m.

Then she heard that the school board was about to make the day start even earlier, at 7:20 a.m.

"I thought, if that happens, I will die," recalled Dos Santos, 17. "I will drop out of

year movement to start high schools later has recently gained momentum in communities like this one, as hundreds of schools in dozens of districts across the country have bowed to the accumulating research on the adolescent body clock.

In just the last two years, high schools in Long Beach, Calif.; Stillwater, Okla.; Decatur, Ga.; and Glens Falls, N.Y., have pushed back their first bells, joining early adopters in Connecticut, North Carolina, Kentucky and Minnesota. The Seattle school board will vote this month on whether to pursue the issue. The superin-

studied eight high schools in three states before and after they moved to later start times in recent years. In results released Wednesday they found that the later a school's start time, the better off the students were in many measures, including mental health, car crash rates, attendance and, in some schools, grades and standardized test scores.

Dr. Elizabeth Miller, chief of adolescent medicine at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, who was not involved in the research, noted that the study was not a randomized controlled trial, which would have com-

brain develops, teenagers who regularly sleep eight to nine hours a night learn better and are less likely to be tardy, get in fights or suffer athletic injuries. Sleeping well can also help moderate their tendency toward impulsive or risky decision-making.

During puberty, teenagers have a later release of the "sleep" hormone melatonin, which means they tend not to feel drowsy until around 11 p.m. That inclination can be further delayed by the stimulating blue light from electronic devices, which tricks the brain into sensing wakeful daylight, slowing the release of mel-

upsets the morning routine for working parents and younger children.

At heart, though, experts say, the resistance is driven by skepticism about the primacy of sleep.

"It's still a badge of honor to get five hours of sleep," said Dr. Judith Owens, a sleep expert at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington. "It supposedly means you're working harder, and that's a good thing. So there has to be a cultural shift around sleep."

In Columbia, Dos Santos created a Facebook page and set up a Twitter account, alerting hundreds of students about the school board meeting on moving up the start of the school day: "Be there to have a say in your school district's decisions on school start times!"

She then got in touch with Start School Later, a non-profit group that provided her with scientific ammunition. She recruited friends and divided up sleep-research topics. With a blast of emails, she tried to enlist the help of every high school teacher in the district. She started an online petition. The testy school board meeting on the subject was packed. Dos Santos, wearing a demure, ruffled white blouse and skirt, addressed the board, blinking owl-like. The dignitaries' faces were a blur to her because while nervously rubbing her eyes, she had removed her contact lenses. But she spoke coolly about the adolescent sleep cycle: "You know, kids don't want to get up," she said. "I know I don't. The board heatedly debated the issue and decided against the earlier start time.

The next day Dos Santos turned to campaigning for a later start time, joining a movement that has been gaining support. A 2011 report by the Brookings Institution recommended later start times for high schools, and last summer Arne Duncan, the secretary of education, posted his endorsement of the idea on Twitter. □



Jillian Dos Santos, center, who has campaigned for a later high school start time, studies at home in Columbia, Mo. The sputtering, nearly 20-year movement to start high schools later has recently gained momentum in communities like this one, as hundreds of schools in dozens of districts across the country have bowed to the accumulating research on the adolescent body clock.

(Dan Gill/The New York Times)

school!"

That was when the sleep-deprived teenager turned into a sleep activist. She was determined to convince the board of a truth she knew in the core of her tired, lanky body: Teenagers are developmentally driven to be late to bed, late to rise. Could the board realign the first bell with that biological reality? The sputtering, nearly 20-

tendent of Montgomery County, Md., supports the shift, and the school board for Fairfax County, Va., is working with consultants to develop options for starts after 8 a.m.

New evidence suggests that later high school starts have widespread benefits. Researchers at the University of Minnesota, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

pared schools that had changed times with similar schools that had not. But she said its methods were pragmatic and its findings promising. "Even schools with limited resources can make this one policy change with what appears to be benefits for their students," Miller said. Researchers have found that during adolescence, as hormones surge and the

atonin and the onset of sleep. The Minnesota study noted that 88 percent of the students kept a cell-phone in their bedroom. But many parents, and some students, object to shifting the start of the day later. They say doing so makes sports practices end late, jeopardizes student jobs, bites into time for homework and extracurricular activities, and